



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

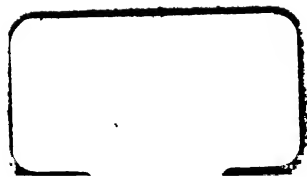
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



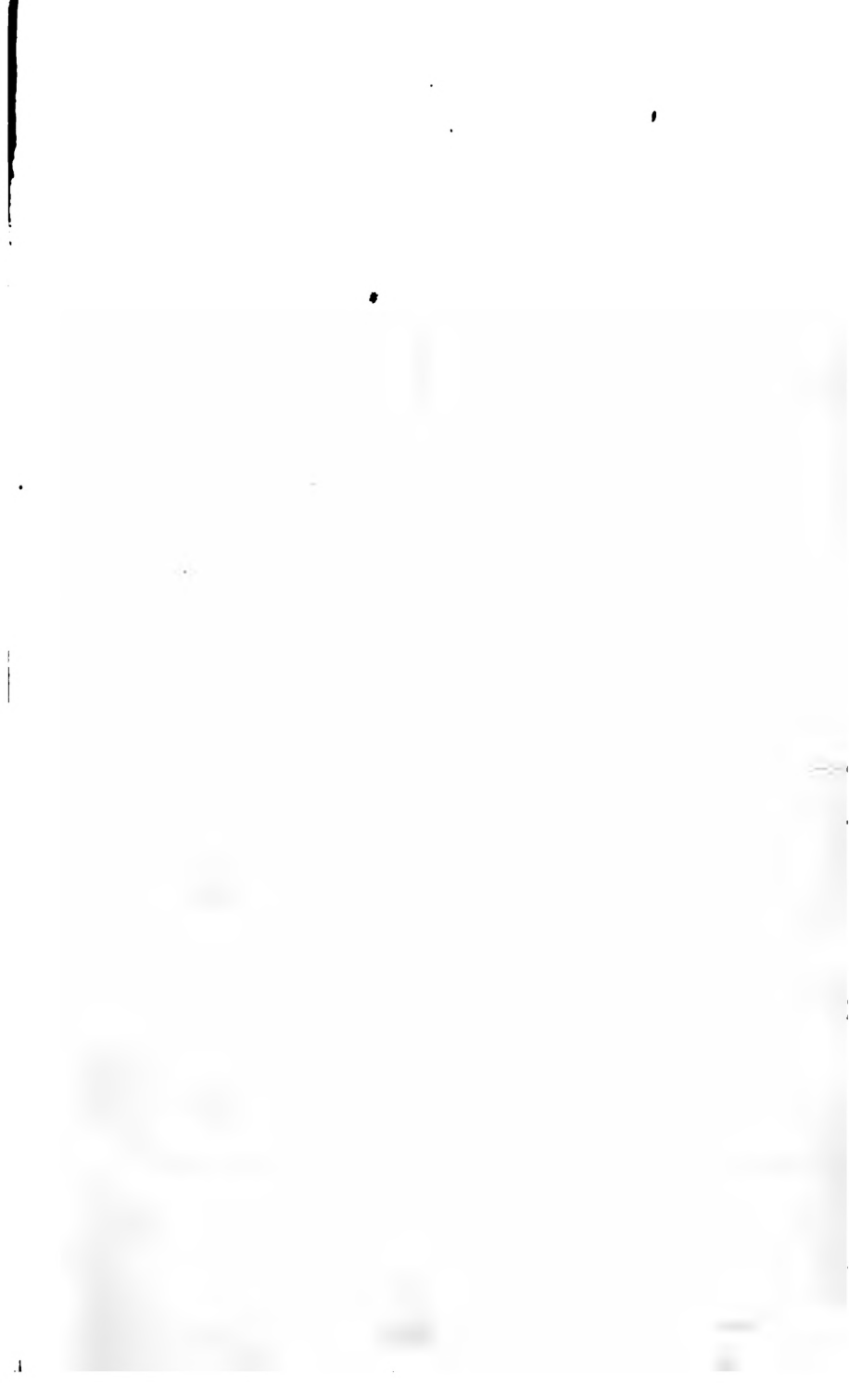
3 3433 08180131 2

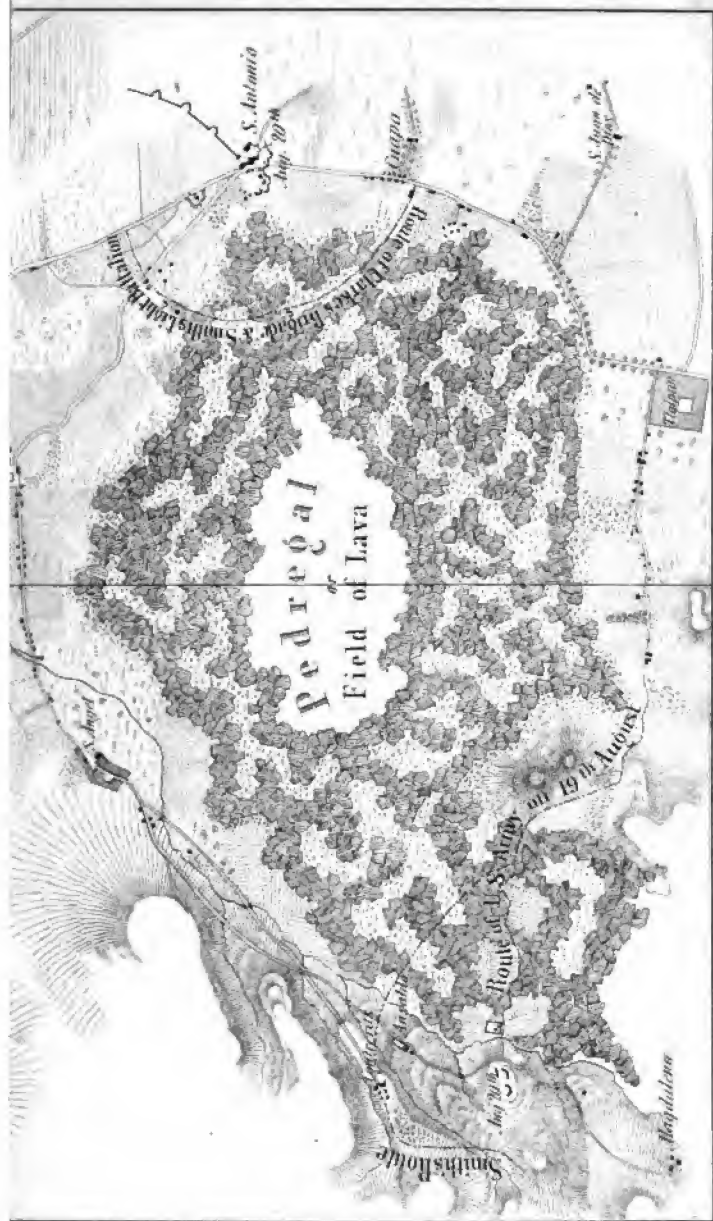




Seminar






$$U_{\alpha}^{\beta} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} \delta_{\alpha\beta} & i\delta_{\alpha\beta} \\ \delta_{\alpha\beta} & -i\delta_{\alpha\beta} \end{pmatrix}$$

SERVICE

A FLOAT AND ASHORE

DURING THE

MEXICAN WAR:

BY

LIEUT: RAPHAEL SEMMES, U: S: N:,  
LATE FLAG-LIEUTENANT OF THE HOME-SQUADRON, AND AID-DE-CAMP OF MAJOR-  
GENERAL WORTH IN THE BATTLES OF THE VALLEY OF MEXICO.



CINCINNATI:

WM. H. MOORE & CO., PUBLISHERS,  
118 MAIN STREET.

1851.

Checked  
May 1910

---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by  
WM. H. MOORE & CO.,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Ohio.

---

---

E. MORGAN & CO.,  
STEREOTYPERS, PRINTERS AND BINDERS,  
111 MAIN STREET.

---



TO THE  
HON. B. J. SEMMES,  
LATE A REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
FROM MARYLAND;  
AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS MANY VIRTUES,  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE;  
AND AS A SLIGHT RETURN FOR THE MANY KINDNESSES RECEIVED AT HIS HANDS,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY HIS FRIEND AND RELATIVE,  
THE AUTHOR.

(3)



## P R E F A C E.

---

THE writer of the following pages was attached to one of the vessels of war of the Home Squadron (then under the command of Commodore Conner), at the breaking out of the late war between the United States and Mexico. After an active participation in the scenes "Afloat," to which the war gave rise, he was dispatched, upon the fall of Vera Cruz, to the seat of the Mexican government, on a mission connected with the exchange of prisoners. In the prosecution of this mission, he joined the army of General Scott at Jalapa, soon after the battle of Cerro Gordo, and marched with it to Puebla. Here he became attached to the staff of General Worth, as a volunteer aid-de-camp; marched with this officer to the valley of Mexico, and continued a member of his military family, until the triumphant entry of the army into the enemy's capital. He was, consequently, six months in the country; during which period, he mixed freely with the inhabitants, and made himself familiar with their history, manners, customs, etc. The following pages are the result of this joint connection with the army and navy, and of this interesting journey, made in one of the most unique and interesting countries of which we have any account. The writer was exceedingly struck with the novelty, and grandeur of the scenery in this *terra incognita*, and with the many phases of society, entirely new to him, which he encountered at every step. If he has not succeeded in impressing the reader as forcibly, the fault has been rather with himself, than with his subject. Many interesting social and political questions were presented to him, as he contemplated the great disparity between the two people, in their civilization, and in the progress they had severally made in the arts; and his object has been, by a hasty sketch of the physi-

cal and moral condition of Mexico; by a review of her manners, customs, religion and laws; and by tracing accurately, though as briefly as possible, the principal events of our naval operations, and of General Scott's campaign, to give his countrymen a *coup d'œil*, not only of the war itself, but of our sister republic, in her internal and more interesting relations. This has been a most difficult task, and one which, he fears, he has but imperfectly accomplished. With a free pen, he has sketched persons and things, *as he saw them*; aiming rather to present the reader with *truthful*, than with highly-wrought pictures. In treating of the campaign, he has not pursued the beaten track, followed with so little discretion by many of his predecessors, of bestowing indiscriminate praise upon all the actors engaged in it, but has rather sought to separate the wheat from the chaff, and bestow commendation and censure alike, wherever he has deemed them to have been deserved. In other words, he has supposed that a candid and intelligent public would be more gratified with a reliable *history* of the recent brilliant campaign of their army, than with an insincere and interested account, which should merely flatter their vanity, and that of their generals. There never yet was a campaign without a blunder; and the campaign of the valley of Mexico is no exception to the rule; and the author has not failed to point out its blunders, any more than he has failed to bring into strong relief, its more salient and brilliant points. In conclusion, he submits his work with entire confidence, to a discriminating public, which must already have been made sick, *ad nauseam*, by the puerilities and puffings that have been bestowed upon the Mexican war.

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

**GEOGRAPHICAL** position of Mexico—Her plains, mountains and climates—Glance at her social, political, and economical condition—The distribution of property among the clergy and other classes, and the political and social effects of this distribution—The miners, carriers, and *Leproses*—The military and their influence. ....7

## CHAPTER II.

**Revolutions in Mexico**—Biographical sketch of General Santa Anna—Enters the Spanish army as a cadet—Is employed against the patriots—Goes over to the popular cause—Makes an offer of marriage to the sister of Iturbide—His alliance declined—Pronounces against Iturbide, and heads the popular movement to overthrow the empire—Becomes the chief of several revolutions, and is finally made president—His Texan campaign; and his banishment from Mexico, in 1845—Financial condition of Mexico, and statement of her military force on the eve of the war. ....23

## CHAPTER III.

**The origin of the war between the United States and Mexico**—The early settlement of Texas by Stephen Austin—Jealousies between the American and Mexican population—The federal system overthrown in Mexico, and a central government adopted—Zacatecas and Texas refuse to give in their adhesion to this change—Mission of Austin to the city of Mexico, and his imprisonment there—Texas declares herself independent—The massacre of Fannin, and the battle of San Jacinto—Commodore Moore and the Texan navy—The United States navy—Acknowledgment of Texan independence by the United States, and the principal powers of Europe—Negotiations and intrigues previous to annexation—Mission of Mr. Slidell and the rupture of diplomatic relations. ....41

## CHAPTER IV.

**March of General Taylor from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande**—Proclamation of the Mexican president—The occurrences which led to the war briefly recapitulated—The march of our race southward—Commencement

of hostilities—The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—Results of these battles—The commanding generals, on both sides, afterward made presidents of their respective countries—Naval operations in the Gulf of Mexico—Enemy's coast blockaded—Liberal principles of the blockade—Nature of the enemy's coast, and the difficulties encountered by the navy in operating upon it—The Sloop-of-war *St. Mary's* and the steamer *Princeton*..... 62

## CHAPTER V.

Mexico attempts to organize a system of privateering, but does not succeed—Loss of the United States brig *Truxton*, and the gallant escape of Lieutenants Hunter and Berryman—Arrival of Commodore Perry in the steamer *Vixen*—Occupation of Laguna, in the peninsula of Yucatan—Governor Bigelow and his levees—Address of the inhabitants to Commodore Perry—Attack of Alvarado—Fails of success by an unfortunate accident—Commodore Perry sails for Tobasco—Captures the town, and makes prizes of several vessels—Author ordered to command the brig *Somers*—Burning of the Mexican brig *Oreole*—Reconnaissance of Passed Assistant Surgeon Wright, and Passed Midshipman Rogers—Capture of the latter—Loss of the United States brig *Somers*..... 80

## CHAPTER VI.

Author ordered to the flag-ship as flag-lieutenant—Reinforcement of the squadron—The campaign in the north of Mexico—Rumors of the arrival of General Scott, and of a campaign against the city of Mexico—The port of Vera Cruz described—Its harbor—The northers—Gale in the *Somers*—Gale in the storeship *Electra*, in the night of Alvarado—The *comets*—Its terrible ravages—Its characteristics.....100

## CHAPTER VII.

Mission of Commander McKensie, of the navy, to Cuba—Return of General Santa Anna to Mexico—Great rejoicing in Vera Cruz on the occasion—He immediately put himself at the head of the ultra war party—His march northward, and the battle of Buena Vista—Arrival of General Scott with his troops and transports—He and Commodore Conner reconnoiter the city of Vera Cruz—Landing of the troops—Investment of the city—Summons and reply—Commencement of hostilities—Tattnall's assault on the Castle—The naval battery, and its destructive fire—Walls breached, and city beaten—Mexicans send a flag of truce to General Scott, and propose a surrender..... 117

## CHAPTER VIII.

Siege of Vera Cruz continued—Articles of capitulation signed—Surrender of the city—The Mexican army marches out, and lays down its arms—General Scott's dispatch announcing the result—General Quitman marches to the attack of Alvarado—Is anticipated by Lieutenant Hunter—Subse-

quent trial of this officer for disobedience of orders—New aspect of Vera Cruz under American rule—Capture of Tuspan—Exploration of the river of this name—Author ordered into the interior of Mexico, on a special mission—Departure from Vera Cruz—Incidents of the road—The alcalde of Santa Fé—Valley of San Juan, and encounter of General Pillow...142

## CHAPTER IX.

Journey continued—Hacienda of Mango de Clavo, the residence of Santa Anna—The Mexican litera—The fair Jalapeñas—Dead body of a soldier—Night encampment and an alarm—Arrival at the Paso de Ovejas, and interview with the alcalde—The author and his horse—Arrival at Puente Nacional, and encampment in another of the houses of Santa Anna—View from the height of the Ouesta de la Calera—Traces of war visible on the road—Arrival at Plan del Rio, in the vicinity of Cerro Gordo—The place of encampment preceding the battle—The hospital and the graves of the common soldiery—Description of the battle of Cerro Gordo—Continuation of journey, and arrival at Jalapa.....166

## CHAPTER X.

Description of Jalapa—The market-place—The multitude, and their costumes—The American volunteer—The luxuriance of vegetation—The peculiarity of the climate—It rains more than half the year—The exceeding transparency of the atmosphere—The baths—The washing establishments—The lavaderos and the soldiers—The author's quarters, and new messmates—Correspondence with General Scott—Arrival of Mr. Trist, as commissioner—A funeral ceremony—Captain Mason of the rifles, and the sympathy occasioned by his death.....187

## CHAPTER XI.

General Santa Anna at Orizaba—His letter to President Anaya—Delay of General Scott at Jalapa—His failure to follow up his victory at Cerro Gordo—Vacillation of purpose, and final discharge of the volunteers—Postponement of campaign—Proclamation, and its effects—March of the army from Jalapa to Puebla—Scenes and incidents by the wayside—San Miguel el Soldado—La Hoya, and General Twiggs' encampment—Las Vigas—Perote and Mount Pizarro—Castle of Perote—Hacienda of San Antonio—Tepeahualco.....206

## CHAPTER XII.

Continuation of journey from Jalapa to Puebla—The road from *Tepeahualco* to *Ojo de Agua*—Hacienda of San José—Napolucan; its beautiful situation in the heart of a fertile district—The indigence of its inhabitants—the Pass of the Pinal—a famous retreat for banditti—Hacienda where General Mexia was shot—The town of Acajete—Encampment for the night—Interview with the cura and the alcalde—Ignorance of these officials—First



view of the volcanoes of Puebla—*Amosque*—the great spur manufactory—The plain of Puebla—Approach to the city—Our Lady of Loretto—Met by generals Worth and Quitman, and escorted into the city—Description of Puebla—Tlascala and Cholula—Puebla as a manufacturing district—Cultivation and manufacture of cotton—Other manufactures—Agriculture—Price of labor—The *Mexico* system.....229

**CHAPTER XIII.**

Description of Puebla continued—The houses—the streets—the multitude—Singular manner of naming streets—The aguadores, or water-carriers—Snow and ice from the volcanoes—The grand plaza—The entry of General Worth into this plaza, and the extraordinary scene which there ensued—The cathedral—The burial-place of the bishops—The portraits of these, for three hundred years back—A visit to the palace of the archbishop—Gallery of paintings, and library of this establishment—Feast of Corpus Christi—A grand high mass in the cathedral—The clergy of Puebla—The churches and convents—The *Paseos*—The Tivoli, and its amusements—Social circles; manners, customs, etc.....251

**CHAPTER XIV.**

Description of Puebla continued—The lower classes—The *leperos*, and the *ladrones*, or robbers—Mexican justice—Mexican houses all closed at eight o'clock at night—The spy company organized by General Scott, and its notorious captain—Dominguez—General Worth's able and politic government of the city, and the good results arising therefrom—St. John's day—The army grows tired of inactivity—The drill grounds, and the splendid divisions of Worth and Twiggs—Sketches of the personal appearance, etc., of the principal officers—Captain Kearney sent forward under a flag of truce; author accompanies him—Excursion to the Rio Frio, and return.....273

**CHAPTER XV.**

Visit to the pyramid of Cholula—The massacre of Cholula—Escape of Passed Midshipman Rogers, and his arrival at Puebla—Negotiations for Peace commenced by Mr. Trist through the mediation of the British minister—Struggle between Santa Anna and congress, to evade the responsibility of undertaking these negotiations—Failure of the negotiations—Santa Anna's strategy, military and political—His resignation of the presidency, and subsequent withdrawal of his resignation—General Scott's preparations for a forward movement—Arrival of reinforcements, under generals Pillow, Pearce, and Cadwallader—Arrival of the marines under Colonel Watson—Author is appointed aid-de-camp to General Worth, and joins his military family—Misunderstanding between generals Scott and Worth.....295

## CHAPTER XVI.

March of the army upon the city of Mexico—General Twiggs the first to move—Is followed by General Quitman—March of General Worth—Encampment at Rio Prieto—San Martin—Pass the volcanoes of Puebla—Arrive at the Rio Frio—Summit-level of the mountains of Anahuac and first view of the valley of Mexico—Description of the valley—The ancient Tenochtitlan and the Aztecs—Its capture by Cortez—Bernal Diaz' account of some of the wonders of the ancient city—Spots rendered famous by the siege of Cortez, identified—Description of the march of Cortez, upon his first entry into the city of Mexico. ....390

## CHAPTER XVII.

Continuation of the description of the ancient Tenochtitlan—Comparison of the topography of the ancient, with that of the modern city—Gradual drying up of the lakes—The causeways—The enemy's position and plan of defense—The Peñon and Mexicalcingo reconnoitered by the engineers, and General Scott's plan of attack—The reconnoissance of Chalco by General Worth, and its consequences—Singular scenery of the lake—Picturesque towns on its borders—Semi-barbarism of the inhabitants—General Worth's letter to General Scott recommending the route by lake Chalco—Colonel Duncan's letter to the "Pittsburgh Post"—General Scott's order No. 349—Correspondence between generals Scott and Worth—Arrest of the latter by the former, etc.—Secretary Marcy's letter.....348

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Continuation of the campaign—March of the army, by the way of Chalco, to San Augustin—Halt at San Gregorio—The Padre of the village and his flock—Borders of Lake Xochimilco—Division halts at Tetelco to reconnoiter—Enters San Augustin, the base of our new line of operations—Concentration of our forces at San Augustin—Movements of the enemy—Worth takes position before San Antonio—Pillow moves in the direction of Contreras—Smith's great victory at this place—An interior view of the enemy's camp, and the spectacle of discord there witnessed. ....370

## CHAPTER XIX.

Worth's encampment before San Antonio—Storming of this place—March of the army upon Churubusco—Worth commands the right of attack—The battle of Churubusco—The storming of the *tête de pont*, and the fall of San Pablo—Consequent defeat and rout of the enemy—Gathering together the wounded, and burial of the dead—March of Scott and Worth upon Tacubaya—The policy of fighting the battle of Churubusco considered, as also our failure to enter the city of Mexico—Armistice.....392

## CHAPTER XX.

The Armistice continued—Exchange of letters between Santa Anna and Rejon—The trickery put in play by the former, to dupe General Scott—Armistices promulgated to both armies—Negotiations for peace—Amusing diplomacy—Rupture of negotiations—Stoning of the American wagons, in the city of Mexico, by the populace—The armistice declared at an end—Sharp correspondence between General Scott and General Santa Anna—The village of Tacubaya described—Execution of the deserters captured at Churubusco—Reflections upon the campaign—Events preceding the battle of Molino del Rey.....414

## CHAPTER XXI.

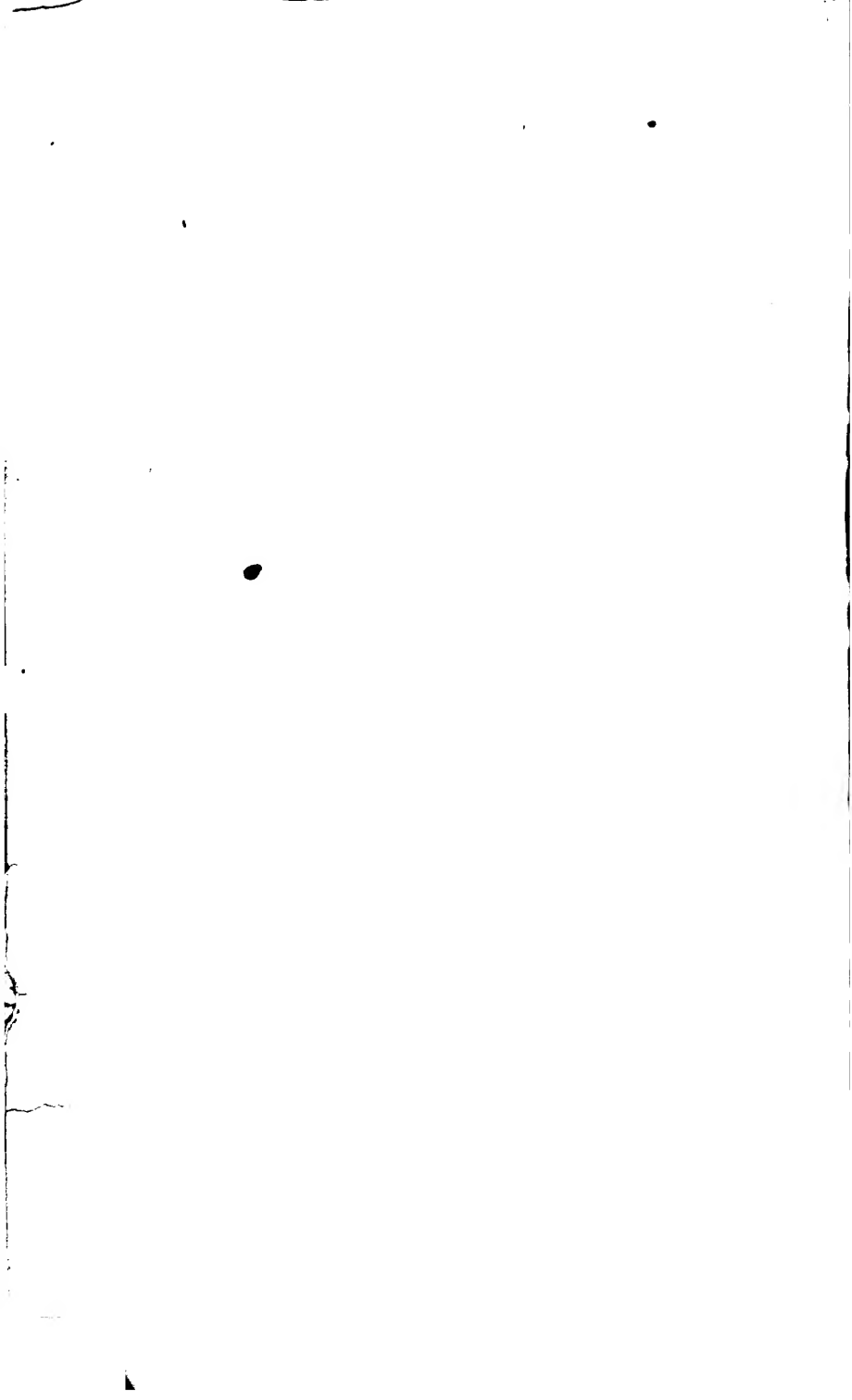
Battle of Molino del Rey—Order of battle—Desperate charges of Wright and McIntosh—Great slaughter that ensued—Duncan's light artillery repulses a charge of the enemy's horse—Piercing the enemy's center, and carrying of the Molino—Fall of the Casa-Mata—Total rout of the enemy—Reflections upon this battle—Its consequences—Bombardment and storming of Chapultepec.....436

## CHAPTER XXII.

Battles of the causeways—Worth's operations on the causeway of San Cosmé—Quitman's operations on the causeway of Chapultepec—Entrance of the army into the city of Mexico—The post of honor given to General Quitman on this occasion—Insurrection of the populace—Suppression of the insurrection—Santa Anna vacates the presidency and expatriates himself—Meeting of the Mexican congress and ratification of peace—Reflections upon the war and its results.....456

ADDENDUM.....480





# SERVICE AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

**GEOGRAPHICAL position of Mexico — Her plains, mountains and climates — Glance at her social, political, and economical condition — The distribution of property among the clergy and other classes, and the political and social effects of this distribution — The miners, carriers, and *Leperos* — The military and their influence.**

MEXICO is the most southern of the States of the North American continent, being bounded on the north and east by the United States, and on the south by Guatemala or Central America and the British Province of Honduras. It is of vast dimensions, and possesses every variety of climate and soil. The Cordilleras of the Andes run through its whole extent from North to South, and divide the country into what is called the *Tierras Templadas*, and the *Tierras Calientes*, or the temperate and torrid regions. The *tierras templadas* consist of immense plains, at a medium elevation of about seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, of no very great width, but extending longitudinally many hundred miles. These plains are generally so level that one may travel in a wheel carriage on them from Oaxaca to Santa Fé, in New Mexico. Magnificent mountains traverse them in various directions, diversifying the country with bold and picturesque scenery, and in some instances shooting their conical peaks far above the region of perpetual snow. The *tierras calientes* lie on the Atlantic and Pacific borders of the state, at the bases of this immense plateau. They consist of alternate tracts of fertile and barren soil, lying but a few feet above the level of the sea. Spurs, shooting off from the great Cordilleras, occasionally run into these, forming beautiful

and picturesque valleys and meadows; and plateaus of all grades of intermediate elevation, rise step above step between them and the great plain above.

The climate of the table lands is a medium between the rigors of the frigid, and the scorching heats of the torrid zone. It is a little colder during the winter than the summer, but vegetation proceeds all the year round. Frosty nights and mornings prevail from November until March, causing the wayfarer to wrap his cloak more tightly around him; but the sun, when he has risen a few degrees above the horizon, uniformly dispels this sensation of chilliness, and warms all nature into life again. On the other hand, the climate of the *tierras calientes* is one of almost unmitigated heat, especially in the more southern parts of the Republic. It thus appears that the physical conformation of Mexico divides it into two great regions, as separate and distinct as though they did not belong to the same country; and we shall see, as we proceed, that this diversity of natural scenery and climate produces, as might be expected, a marked effect upon the character and pursuits of the people.

The population of Mexico is estimated at about eight millions. It is probably rather above than below this estimate; although it is impossible to say with accuracy, as there are no regular statistics of any kind kept in the country. Mexico has been independent, now, thirty years—a short space of time in the life of a nation. From the conquest by Hernando Cortez down to the period of the first revolution in France, the Spanish colonies in America had been governed with great success by the mother country—so far as success may be said to consist in preserving the *statum in quo*, uninterrupted by turbulence or commotion of any kind, on the part of the colonists. But the new-born ideas of liberty which became fashionable in France toward the close of the last century, found their way into these colonies, in greater or less profusion, in spite of the Inquisition, and of the iron despotism of Viceroy, and *Audiencias Reales*. The example of the United States, too, had a powerful influence upon them; and the consequence was, that when Napoleon, by force and fraud, took possession of Spain, procured the abdication of the weak Charles IV, and proclaimed his brother Joseph king, the



liberal ideas which the colonists had been gradually imbibing began to produce their effect. The *Grito*, or *Shout of Dolores*—as the first cry of liberty in Mexico is called—was raised on the night of the 16th September, 1810, by Hidalgo and Morales. A sanguinary struggle of eleven years ensued—similar in many of its important features to our own revolution—until 1821, when the Spaniards, beaten at all points, were forced to evacuate the country. On the 27th September, in this year, the Mexican flag was hoisted, for the first time, on the Viceregal Palace of Mexico. A regency was immediately established under Don Augustin Iturbide, who had been a colonel of infantry in the Spanish army, and who, toward the close of the struggle, *pronounced\** against the royal cause, and went over to the patriots with all his forces.—This *pronunciamiento*, so fatal an example in Mexican history, is styled the *pronunciamiento* of Iguala, from the place where it occurred; and Iturbide, notwithstanding his subsequent career, has been elevated to an honorable niche in the temple of Mexican history, being styled the “Hero of Iguala.” As might have been expected, he who had betrayed his master for the people, very soon betrayed the people to become their master.

The hero of Iguala had not been installed many months in the regency before he declared himself “Emperor of Mexico,” established guards, erected palaces—or rather converted into palaces several of the magnificent public buildings with which the capital was already supplied—and otherwise surrounded himself by the pomp and circumstance of an imperial court. His dynasty was of short duration, however, as he was soon hurled from power by a general uprising of the people, whose confidence he had abused. He was banished, and undeservedly pensioned; but returning in disguise from his banishment soon afterward, with the view to regain

---

\* A word of explanation is necessary here, to the uninitiated reader of Mexican history. When one revolts against the government, in Mexico, he is said to *pronounce*; and a revolution is called a *pronunciamiento*. The first step in a *pronunciamiento* is, for the chief who revolts, to issue a manifesto, declaring that he and his party no longer recognize the authority of the party in power. The next step is, to put forth what is called the *plan*—that is to say, an elaborate declaration of the policy and principles of the revolutionary party. The *pronunciamiento* and the *plan* being issued, the new party is ready to begin the struggle for ascendancy.

his power, he was recognized and shot. This was the first essay of self-government in Mexico! an essay which surprises us, at the first view; but which upon a little reflection appears quite natural. Iturbide's movement marked the commencement of a new era and a new struggle in Mexico; a struggle which has not yet ended. It was not the movement of an individual merely, striving for self-aggrandizement, but of a then strong and powerful party. Mexico, although she had achieved her independence of Spain, when she hoisted her newly-formed flag on the ancient palace of the viceroys, had achieved nothing more. She had not, nor has she yet, achieved her liberty—the struggle for this did but commence, when the struggle for independence ceased.

The war of the revolution having broken up the old organizations, and resolved the various parties into their original elements, it remained to be seen whether these elements would coalesce, so far as to form a harmonious government. A year's experience under the regency and empire of Iturbide, proved that they would not; and if we scrutinize a little more closely the nature and constitution of the population of Mexico at this period, we shall perceive the reasons why they did not. In the United States, it was the most natural thing in the world, that we should betake ourselves quietly to our republican forms of government, so soon as we had achieved our independence. These forms already existed, and we had been for several generations accustomed to them. Our colonial organizations had been ultra democratic in their commencement, and had so continued, with rare exceptions, to the period of our revolution. We were all equals, politically, and very nearly so, socially. There were no orders of nobility established among us, and almost the only pursuits were those of agriculture and commerce; pursuits which tend eminently to equalize men, and to train them to the same modes of thought and action. All was harmony with us, therefore, and nothing was more easy than the fusion of parties when it became necessary for us to form a government. As for our principles, there was no fundamental difference among us in regard to them. Not so with the Mexicans. They had been governed by the most despotic power of Europe for three centuries; in other words, for nine generations. What an apprenticeship to servitude! During

this long period of the domination of Priests and Viceroy, all the lights of science and learning, not to say of civilization, had been carefully shut out from them.

So great was the vigilance of the mother country in excluding from the kingdom of New Spain, as Mexico was then called, such extraneous influences as might tend to enlighten the people, and awaken them to a sense of their power; that all the ports of the latter province were hermetically sealed against foreign commerce; and the intercourse with the mother country herself was only permitted to be carried on through two of them—Vera Cruz, on the Atlantic, and Acapulco on the Pacific. Indeed, we may say that Vera Cruz was the only gate through which access could be had to the country; as the trade of Acapulco was confined to a single annual ship, from the Philippine islands. Thus was commerce paralyzed, and Mexico rendered a sort of *terra incognita* to the civilized world, during the long period of her colonial history. Instead of expanding and flourishing, as the North American colonies had done, under a somewhat more liberal treatment, she scarcely increased in population, and in the development of her wealth, from century to century. At the period of her revolution, instead of presenting herself to the world, as a young and flourishing nation; girded by two oceans; rich in all the natural elements that make a nation great; enlightened, tolerant, and energetic, she came forth to the struggle apparently bowed down by the premature weight of years. The grasping and insatiable hand of monopoly had rifled her of many of her choicest physical treasures, and the leaden calm of ignorance and superstition, in which she had stagnated for three hundred years, had well nigh stifled all her moral and intellectual energies. In short, she was fast verging toward a premature decrepitude, when the glorious shout of Dolores aroused her from her lethargy and called her back to life.

That we may have a better idea of Mexican society, at this period, let us endeavor to separate its elements, and classify them. One of the most powerful agents in giving character to classes, and through these, to society at large, is property. Let us see, in the first place, how this was distributed in Mexico, and in the next, what were the results of the distribution.

To begin with the proprietorship of lands. It is well known to have been the uniform practice of the Spanish conquerors, to divide among themselves and their subordinates, after the manner of the feudal system then prevalent in the greater part of Europe, all, or a greater part of the lands of the conquered territories; and along with those lands, the simple Indians who inhabited them. These divisions were called *repartimientos*, and *encomiendas*. Cortez, very soon after the conquest, thus parceled out the lands of Mexico; and these lands have descended from father to son, under a system of entail, until a very recent period, with very little change, if we except the subdivision of some of the larger grants, and the amelioration in the condition of the Indians, so far as their political rights are concerned. The necessary consequence of this state of things was, the creation of a landed aristocracy; who abandoning, for the most part, their estates to the management of *mayordomos* and *administradores*, congregated in the cities to spend their wealth in the amusements and frivolities of life; to revolve, as a kind of lesser planets, around the court of the Viceroy, and in return for the smile of the latter, to say nothing of occasional privileges conferred upon them, to aid in upholding the despotism under which they lived. Wealth not only is power, but it everywhere covets power, and hence this disposition on the part of the landed aristocracy of Mexico was one of the natural consequences of the division of property. The clergy was another powerful element in Mexican society, both on account of its immense property, and of the religious influence it exercised over the people. It is estimated by Señor Otero, one of the best informed men in Mexico, that notwithstanding the banishment of the Jesuits and the confiscation of the property that belonged to their order; notwithstanding the disasters and extraordinary expenses incurred by the clergy during the war of the revolution, and the sale since, of many valuable estates, their landed property is worth about eighteen millions of dollars—its value being assessed in conformity with the present low rates of this description of property. But these estates form but a small proportion of the wealth of the clergy, they having other, and much more considerable sources of revenue. One of the principal of these was the *derecho real*, a kind of perpetual lien, to the amount of

five per cent., on all the rest of the real estate of the Republic! This lien amounted to about forty-four millions and a half of dollars; the interest, or rather rent of which, they were entitled to receive annually. This mortgage or lien was rather better than the absolute ownership of so much real estate; as without the trouble and expense attendant upon the management of this description of property, they were sure to receive their proportional share of the income. To these sums we must add still, the enormous one of seventy-one and a half millions of dollars, which was the capital corresponding to the income they were authorized to receive from the people in the shape of certain forced contributions; and the further one of three millions, being the capital whose product they were authorized to receive from *limosnas* and *obven-ciones*; a kind of per centum on the annual produce of agriculture, the interest of money, etc.

It thus appears that this influential body of men wielded a capital sum of one hundred and twenty-seven millions of dollars! What a powerful hierarchy, for good or for evil, have we not here, as another consequence of the unequal distribution of property in Mexico! We have seen that the landed proprietors, other than the clergy, were in the habit, for the most part, of congregating in the cities, and there spending their incomes in the follies and frivolities of life, to the diminution of their influence in the country at large. Not so the clergy; they were scattered all over the republic, their possessions being co-extensive with the limits of the state. Their religious duties, moreover, called them into every town and hamlet, however remote, and even into the open fields. There was no man in the republic, however obscure, or how far so ever removed from the haunts of civilization, who did not come into social and business contact with the parish priest.

They were beside the spiritual advisers of their flocks, the trainers of youth in the various schools and colleges—the higher branches of learning being exclusively in their hands—and the beneficent distributors of charity, in a country where the poor and indigent had already become a numerous class. If we add to these considerations, the fact that in times of disorganization and revolution, the weak—intellectually—are always guided by the

strong, especially if to intellectual strength there be added moral and religious considerations, we shall be forced to admit that the clergy, with its immense wealth distributed equally throughout the country, its hosts of subordinates and dependents, its learning, and its charity, must be one of the most powerful orders of the state.

In regarding the clergy as a social and political element of society, there remains an important circumstance to be noticed, however; and this is, that they are not united, but are operated upon by various influences, that predispose them to act very different parts in the political and civil commotions yet to be witnessed in Mexico. We may divide them into three classes, viz: the High Clergy, the Low Clergy, and the Regular Clergy, as contradistinguished from the Secular Clergy.

The first class is composed of the bishops and the members of the various ecclesiastical courts, who are possessed of large incomes, administer the church property, and live in the principal cities, in the enjoyment of all the comforts, and many of the luxuries of life. The important functions exercised by the bishops, their frequent contact with the rest of the clergy and with society, necessarily give them a great influence; and it is but justice to observe that the majority of them are men of very exemplary character. Being large property holders, occupying, socially, a superior position, and being at the head of a provincial hierarchy, it is quite natural that they should be eminently conservative in their politics; their conservatism running sometimes into monarchy. They have no affinity whatever with democracy.—On the contrary, they fear it, as it has more than once attempted to lay profane hands on the church property.

The second class consists of the great body of the curates and other secular priests, distributed throughout the country. These are, for the most part, natives, and, like similar classes in all other countries where there is an established religion, are in the receipt of very limited incomes—barely enough to supply them with the necessaries of life. They also have an extensive influence with the population, with whom they are in constant contact, and to whom they render all the really important services of religion.—Being condemned to perform all the drudgery of the church—if

such an expression may be applied to a thing so holy—at the same time that they are denied the enjoyments and privileges of the high clergy, they are necessarily jealous of this latter class, and are only bound to it by the ties of community. They share the political sentiments of the mass of the people, and are, most of them, good republicans.

The third class, or what is called the regular clergy, consists of monks of the various religious orders. Before the establishment of bishoprics and the consequent organization of the curacies, these monks were the missionaries of Mexico, whose duty it was to propagate Christianity among the Indians. Being in a measure independent of the control of the bishops, a natural jealousy exists between them and the secular clergy; and having been superseded in their functions as missionaries by the curates, they have become, to a certain extent, a separate and distinct organization. They live in fraternities, immured within the walls of their convents, and are, for the most part, governed by Spanish superiors, having little or no sympathy with the mass of the native population. They have relaxed much of their ancient discipline, and being possessed of considerable revenues, lead a life of indolence and ease, which has given much scandal to the more religious inhabitants. They are, in consequence, held in but little esteem, and exert no influence except such as naturally flows from their property. They are consumers without being producers. Their numbers are yearly diminishing, and the day is perhaps not far distant, when they will cease to exist altogether. As a social and political element, they are of but little weight. Thus we see that much of the influence which the clergy might otherwise exert, is destroyed by neutralising elements existing within its own body.

But to continue with our view of the distribution of property: Beside the holders of entailed estates, and the clergy, who are the two great landed feudatories of Mexico, there are some small farmers and planters, who have gradually become possessed of property; but owing to the very backward state of tillage in Mexico, and the depressed prices of all agricultural products—the causes of which will be pointed out in a subsequent part of this work—they scarcely form a class of sufficient importance to be taken into view for our purpose. Their feeble influence is always

thrown into the popular scale; the inhabitants of this description being in all countries the farthest removed from corruption, and the most sturdy defenders of liberty.

During the colonial vassalage of Mexico, all her foreign commerce was conducted by native Spaniards, as I have before remarked. A few Spanish houses, located in Cadiz, Manilla, Vera Cruz, Acapulco, and the city of Mexico, received all the foreign goods and distributed them among the merchants of the country, who, in turn, distributed them among the smaller dealers. Toward the latter part of her domination, Spain removed some of her commercial restrictions, and the monopoly of commerce was finally destroyed by the revolution. Still, most of the external trade, and indeed much of the internal also, is in the hands of foreigners—principally English, French, and Germans. The capital wielded by these men gives them, necessarily, considerable influence, socially, but scarcely any, politically. Being strangers to the institutions of the country, and feeling little or no interest in her welfare, except in so far as this affects their business, they studiously keep aloof from politics. They are, from interest, however, conservatives and lovers of order; as commerce, like the sensitive plant, thrives best when untouched. Much of the floating capital of the country is invested in the mines, which give occupation to no inconsiderable part of the population. These mines are mostly worked by large companies, chiefly composed of foreigners, and who operate with foreign capital; we may, therefore, class this branch of industry under the head of commerce, and apply to it the same remarks. Many intelligent Mexicans have, through the press and otherwise, charged the foreign merchants domiciled among them, with exciting the civil broils and contentions of the country; the better to enable them to monopolize its commerce. It is scarcely necessary, in the present day, to reply to this charge, as every tyro in economics knows that commerce is so intimately linked with agriculture and manufactures, that it can only flourish with them; and that these flourish only in times of quiet.

There are many homely articles of the first necessity manufactured in Mexico; but as the business of manufacturing is carried on, on a small scale, by men of small means—with rare excep-



tions—we may put this class of the population in the same category with the small farmers and planters, and suppose them to be operated upon by the same influences, and to have the same political tendencies.

We have thus cast a rapid glance at the distribution of property in Mexico, but we have as yet had under review but a small proportion of the population. Five-sixths of the eight millions of the country are utterly without property of any description, being laborers dependent from day to day upon their exertions for subsistence. They belong to that class which in all countries occupies the lowest social position, and are condemned to perform the most laborious and meanest offices of life. They are not only separated by class, but by race also, from the other one-sixth of the population; and there is no more sympathy or affinity between these two great fractions of the eight millions of Mexico, than there is between the slaves of the southern part of the United States and their masters—indeed, not so much; as the closer relation which exists between master and slave with us, begets more or less of mutual regard; the master bestowing upon his slave the kindly feeling which is naturally inspired by those who are dependent upon us, and the slave, in return, regarding himself as a member of his master's family, and more or less identified with his interests. I think I hazard nothing in saying that they do not possess the intelligence of the southern negro; at least that portion of them which inhabits the *tierras templadas*, or upland regions, for there is a marked difference between them; the natives of the *tierras calientes* being much more sprightly. Still, as by the constitution of the country they are admitted to the rights and privileges of freemen, we must regard them as one of the social and political elements of the state, and examine their condition accordingly. At the period of the conquest, Mexico was comparatively a civilized state. The accounts we have of the inhabitants of that period have, no doubt, come down to us much colored and exaggerated by the warm imaginations of the Spanish historians, but still enough authentic record remains to convince us that they had made considerable progress in the arts and sciences of civilization. Agriculture, commerce, and manufactures were all practiced successfully among them, and they were in the habit of handing

down their history by written records—rude hieroglyphics, it is true, but still ingeniously contrived to answer their purpose. The Spanish conquerors, who were adventurers, in quest of glory and gold, and to whom manual labor would have been a degradation, having divided the territory among them, seized upon the natives also, as their serfs and dependents, and condemned them to the most cruel labors and hardships. The constitutions of these being naturally fragile, soon began to give way under their misfortunes, and they sensibly diminished in numbers. The church, about the same time, through the venerable Las Casas, threw around them the mantle of her protection, and compelled the conquerors to have recourse to Africa for stronger and more serviceable arms, wherewith to cultivate their estates. These, mixing with the Indians, and both of them mixing, again, with the white man, have produced the present abject and miserable race which constitutes so large a portion of the Mexican population. The negroes, as a separate race, have disappeared from among them, and one discovers but slight traces of their blood in this mongrel stock—nor have the whites mixed with them to any very great extent. This resulting compound has lost all the intelligence of its remote ancestors, the Aztecs of the days of Cortez, without having been benefited by their contact with the white man. Indeed, this contact has not only been negatively, but positively injurious to them, since they have imbibed many of the low vices of civilization, without any of its virtues; and I do but repeat the language of the best informed Mexicans themselves, when I describe the great majority of them as servile and abject in the extreme, devoid of intelligence and debased in morals.

Let us examine this class, such as I have described it, a little more minutely, as we find it distributed among the different industrial pursuits, and more or less modified by them. The *encomiendas* and *repartimientos* existed in all their rigor in Mexico for more than two hundred years, during which period the Indian population became reduced to the abject condition in which we find it. When they were released from this servitude, they were but handed over from one master to another; the new master—necessity—being more stern and inexorable than the old one. In other words, they found it more difficult, owing to their natural

indolence of character and inability to undergo severe labor, and the backward state of agriculture, to procure the necessaries of life, in a state of freedom, than in one of servitude. The revolution came without ameliorating their condition; education has done nothing to enlighten them, and they present, still, the sad spectacle of a body of men who have no other wants than those of mere animal existence, and who possess no other social organization than that of the fields wherein they labor; they are, in fact, wholly without those intellectual and moral necessities, the gratification of which affords to man his highest pleasure, as a social being. They live in miserable huts, no better than the wigwam of the North American Indian; sustain life by the coarsest and most uninviting food, and cover themselves from the elements with the most primitive clothing, formed of the coarsest description of cloths and of the mats of the country! I speak more particularly of the inhabitants of the elevated plains—those of the *tierras calientes* are somewhat further advanced in civilization, and enjoy more of the comforts of life.

The greater part of the population distributed in the cities and towns of the republic, exercising the mechanic arts, and laboring in the various processes of industry, and supplying the demand for personal service, are of the same origin as those already described; and although they are better paid, they remain in the same state of degradation, owing to their frequent contact with the rest of their race, and the rude state of the mechanic arts. The only result of their residence in the cities has been the imitating of the depravity of the upper classes—the imitations being frequently worse than the originals; as is often the case when the vices of civilization are grafted on the savage character.

The predial laborers, considered as a social and political element in the organization of the state, may be regarded as a negative quantity; and the class just spoken of as worse than nothing, as their influence cannot but be pernicious. In all the large cities, as Mexico, Puebla, &c., there is a class still more degraded than either of these; the *Leperos*, who are a sort of idle, roving vagabonds, who have no ostensible means of living. The women of this class are without chastity, and the men petty rogues and thieves. The prisons are annually filled with them—the ex-Acor-

dada of Mexico sometimes containing as many as fifteen hundred at a time! They are expert in the use of the knife, and assassination is a common practice with them. As strange as it may appear, I think I do not exaggerate when I state their number at ten thousand in the city of Mexico alone! There is another fraction yet of this *tiers état* engaged in laboring in the mines and in transporting merchandise from place to place. The miners being constantly at work, for the most part, under ground, and employed in the most brutalizing of all labor, are in no wise elevated, in point of intelligence, above their brethren of the same origin. If we add to this, that in the neighborhood of all the great mines, large towns and even cities have sprung up, composed chiefly of laborers, drivers, contractors and others engaged in mining operations—many of them being foreigners, remaining for a time only in the country, and but little interested in the preservation of its morals, so long as civil order prevails—we shall not be far wrong, if we attribute to this class all the degradation arising from ignorance and vice, which we have attributed to their cognates in the other cities.

The carriers of commerce, from their mode of life, can be but little better. They are, perhaps, rather more intelligent, though entirely unlettered. Spending most of their time on lonely and unfrequented roads, and the intervals between their journeys, in *posadas* and low *pulquerias* or grog shops, they have neither the time, nor the associates proper to, elevate their intelligence, or improve their morals.

We have confined our view, hitherto, to the civil occupations of life, and to the classes engaged in them. There remains yet to be considered a most important element of Mexican society, indeed the most important, since it is the most disturbing element of them all—I mean the military. Mexico had been governed by a military despotism for three hundred years, previous to the achievement of her independence. During this long and death-like reign of the military power, in which generations of masters, arrayed in the pomp and panoply of war, had successively governed the country, it is not to be wondered at, that an undue estimate was placed upon the military art and upon military men. The court of the viceroy was little else than a military levee,

where the sash and the epaulet added grace and fascination to the more substantial attributes of power. The provincial Hidalgo regarded it as a great favor to have a military appointment bestowed upon his son, while to such of the commoners as received this honor, it opened the way to their intercourse with the nobility. The youth, generation after generation, read with wonder and admiration the history of the conquest, and of the conquerors, and longed to be inscribed in so noble a profession; while garrisons, the officers of which occupied the first positions, socially, and the soldiers a position much above that from which they were drawn, were distributed at all the principal points of the kingdom; thus still farther infecting the people with a love of military life. Independently of this previous training, the war of the revolution lasted eleven long years—a period sufficiently great to convert the whole of the then generation into soldiers. Such are the charms and fascination of this mode of life, especially to an ardent and imaginative people, that nothing has been found more difficult, in all ages, than to induce the soldier to strip himself of his paraphernalia, and quietly lay down his arms when he has once become habituated to them by long use. The chiefs cling to the power which they fear to lose, and dread the prospect of sinking again to the level of ordinary life; while the common soldier, both from inclination and affection, clings to his chief. During the eleven years which the Mexican revolution lasted, the whole population had been more or less under arms, while the mines, agriculture, and commerce were all, if not abandoned, at least, very much neglected. The laboring classes, who form the rank and file of armies, when once withdrawn from the galling drudgery of the fields and the work-shops, and initiated into the idleness and vices of a camp, are, to a greater or less extent, forever after ruined for all the useful purposes of life. Some few, possessing families, betake themselves to their homes at the conclusion of a war; but the great mass roam about without occupation, and are ever ready to enlist under the banner of any chief who will hold out to them the temptations of excitement and plunder. Our late war with Mexico, though of but two years' duration, was a partial illustration of this. How long was it not before our returned volunteers could throw off the habits of the campaign, and settle themselves down

quietly to peaceful avocations? The Cuban expedition was one of the manifestations of their restlessness, and the enlistment of a regiment in the service of Yucatan, another. But to go back farther, and to a more illustrious example. It required all the energy and decision of Washington, aided by his great weight of character, to prevent our army, at the close of our revolutionary war, from throwing away the laurels it had so gloriously won, and entering upon a sanguinary struggle with the civil power of the government. Who can calculate the misery and wretchedness which would probably have been entailed upon the country, if his place had been occupied by an ambitious and unscrupulous chief? We of the present generation might, in that event, possibly have read our own history in that of unfortunate Mexico. If then, our law-loving and law-abiding people, who were nearly all republicans, and among whom there were none of those elements of discord, growing out of the unequal distribution of property and of privileges, which we have seen in Mexico, were so near shipwreck in the very hour of making their port, should we wonder at the usurpation and fall of Iturbide?

## CHAPTER II.

Revolutions in Mexico—Biographical sketch of General Santa Anna—Enters the Spanish army as a cadet—Is employed against the patriots—Goes over to the popular cause—Makes an offer of marriage to the sister of Iturbide—His alliance declined—Pronounces against Iturbide, and heads the popular movement to overthrow the empire—Becomes the chief of several revolutions, and is finally made president—His Texan campaign; and his banishment from Mexico, in 1845—Financial condition of Mexico, and statement of her military force on the eve of the war.

HAVING thus reviewed the various social and political elements remaining in Mexico, upon the dissolution of the old organisation, we are in a condition to continue our sketch the more understandingly, of the efforts of the people to bring about a new organisation. Reasoning, *à priori*, from the picture we have had presented to us of the republic, we should be inclined to draw the conclusion, that many other intestine struggles would ensue, before order could be restored. We shall find this to have been the case. The empire being overthrown, an executive council, consisting of several persons, was invested with the powers of the administration, until a more regular government could be organized. In the meantime a constituent congress was called to frame a constitution. In that day, the Mexicans were great admirers of the institutions of the United States; our example had had great influence with them, in inciting them to revolution against the mother country, and in encouraging them to a perseverance in the conflict, under adverse circumstances. On our part, we sympathized with them in their struggle for freedom; but, as a government, bound to neutrality by the wise policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations, we could do no more than give them this moral aid. As they had witnessed the unprecedented expansion of the United States, in population, and in all the other elements of wealth and greatness, for half a century preceding the calling together of this congress, they naturally and

justly attributed to our political institutions, much of the efficacy of this improvement. It was quite natural, therefore, that they should look to us as their model. Accordingly, the congress adopted, in 1824, a constitutional plan of government, nearly identical with that of the United States, save in the important exception of establishing a religion of state, and excluding all others—a fundamental error with regard to all governments, and more especially with regard to those of a republican form. But, as yet, Mexico was not in a condition to effect this important reform.—The order of the clergy was too powerful a constituent of the body politic, not to insist, at least, upon this sacrifice to it. If the revolution had occurred forty or fifty years sooner, the clergy would have been the ruling power in the state, and would, without doubt, have possessed itself of the entire government. But it had been gradually declining in political importance since the first French revolution, and the great shock the mother church had received in Spain itself, in consequence of this fermentation of liberal ideas. General Guadalupe Victoria, one of the principal heroes of the revolution, was elected the first president under this constitution, and was installed in office in the month of January, 1825. It is not my purpose to describe the working of the new government, in all its details—this would require me to write the history of Mexico; whereas, I only mean to present a bird's-eye view of its civil commotions. Comparative quiet followed the installation of President Victoria, until July, 1828; when another revolution broke out, and kept the country in a state of anarchy and disorder, until the close of the year. General Vincente Guerrero, another of the heroes of the revolution, having overcome all competitors, was made president, in the beginning of 1829. General Guerrero, after a short administration of not quite a year, was, in turn, precipitated from power, by another and a bloody revolution, in which he was made prisoner and barbarously shot. In 1830, he was succeeded by General Anastasio Bustamante, who served a little over two years, and was succeeded, in 1832, by General Manuel Gomez Pedraza. Pedraza served but one year; and in the beginning of 1833, we find General Antonio Lopez Santa Anna becoming president, by means of another revolution. As this general has played a much more important part in Mexi-



can history than any of his cotemporaries, it may not be uninteresting to pause here, a moment, while we briefly sketch his character and career, up to the period of which we write. I think it may be affirmed of him, that he has been the archdemon of discord in Mexico, for more than a quarter of a century. So far at least as one may judge from the press, and other vehicles of opinion, this would unquestionably be the award of nine-tenths of his countrymen. He was born of obscure parents, and is therefore entirely

"Artifex fortunæ suæ."

About the year 1811 or 1812, he entered as a cadet in the Spanish regiment of infantry of Vera Cruz: thus, at an age when all the noble and generous impulses are strongest, taking sides against the popular movement, then commencing. In 1814, we find him stationed at Vera Cruz, then under the government of General Davila. He was placed, by this general, in command of a party of irregular troops, called *Jaroches*, destined to act outside the walls against the insurgents. It was here he first commenced that system of trick and deception, which he has since practiced so successfully, of feigning marches and battles against his enemies, to gain credit with his superiors. He did, in fact, become a favorite with General Davila, and received from him many kindnesses; among others, that of being made a lieutenant, in 1815. When Iturbide went over to the popular cause, in 1821, and proclaimed the Plan of Iguala, Santa Anna had reached the grade of captain. About this time, General Herrera, one of the chiefs of independence, established himself at Orizaba, and commenced a *guerrilla* warfare against the Spaniards. Santa Anna, meeting a small party of his troops, attacked them with his *Jaroches*, and defeated them. For this affair, he received from the hands of the viceroy the brevet of lieutenant-colonel. Soon after the receipt of this honor, finding that the popular cause, which had received a new impulse from the treachery of Iturbide, was rapidly gaining ground, like an astute politician, he changed sides, also, and going over to Herrera, was received into the patriot service, as that of the popular party was then called.—The battle of Cordova (near Orizaba) was fought soon afterward, and resulted in a complete victory in favor of the republi-

can arms. Santa Anna had command of the cavalry in this battle, and is accused of a want of co-operation with his superior; thereby permitting the broken and scattered forces of the Spaniards to retire in safety to Orizaba. After the capture of Puebla, he was intrusted by Iturbide, with the command of an expedition against Vera Cruz. His command consisted of about fifteen hundred men (he was now a lieutenant-colonel, with the brevet of colonel), and he laid siege to the city, still commanded by his former friend and benefactor, Gen. Davila. He assaulted it, at several points, after a few days of investment, but was beaten back by a garrison much inferior in numbers. Some skirmishing ensued after this, but before anything decisive could be undertaken, the enemy withdrew, and retired to the castle of San Juan de Ulloa. Santa Anna marched peaceably into the city. For this service, he was promoted to the grade of colonel, and made a brigadier-general by brevet. He was now thirty-three or four years of age. When Iturbide proclaimed the empire, in 1822, Santa Anna repaired to the city of Mexico to push his fortunes. One of the consequences of the usurpation of Iturbide, was the elevation of the several members of his family to the rank of princes and princesses of the blood royal. One of these princesses—Doña Nicolana—was a maiden sister of the emperor, of about sixty years of age. Santa Anna, having aspired to the hand of this lady, had the mortification to have his pretensions rejected by the emperor; and, in consequence, became his bitter enemy. Having been ordered to report himself for duty at Vera Cruz, on the termination of this affair, he repaired thither, and immediately set on foot a conspiracy against his late master; with whom he had, thus fruitlessly, sought to connect himself. His first step was to corrupt his own regiment, which he caused to mutiny; and with this greatly preponderating force, he had no difficulty in drawing over to him the remainder of the garrison. He then proclaimed the republic, and having entered into an armistice with the Spanish commandant of San Juan de Ulloa, prepared to defend himself. He did not stand long on the defensive, however, but putting himself at the head of his troops, he marched upon Jalapa, the capital of the department of Vera Cruz. General Calderon, the governor of the department, here awaited him,

though with a much inferior force. Assaulting the town, he was repulsed, and in the first consternation of defeat, fled on horseback to Plan del Rio, some eighteen miles distant, while his gallant subordinates, Colonels Leno and Torro were yet engaged with the enemy. The whole of the force which he had thus abandoned, was either killed or captured; Col. Leno being among the former, and Col. Torro, after displaying prodigies of valor, among the latter. The wily chief continued his flight to Vera Cruz, where he shut himself up within the walls, and where he was soon afterward besieged by Gen. Echovani. Notwithstanding this failure, the movement which he had commenced became general, and resulted, as all the world knows, in the dethronement and death of Iturbide. We next find him playing a prominent part in seconding the "*Plan of Lobato*," the object of which was the expulsion from the country of all the native Spaniards. This injudicious measure inflicted a terrible blow upon Mexico, as the consequence was the withdrawal of a large proportion of the capital of the republic, and the expatriation of some of its best citizens. About the year 1827, he was elected governor of the state of Vera Cruz. In the latter part of 1828, Gen. Pedraza was elected president, but being the mortal enemy of Santa Anna, the latter put himself at the head of the troops of his state, to prevent him from assuming the office. Gen. Guerrero pronouncing against the government about the same time, the result was that Pedraza was deprived of his office, and Gen. Guerrero elevated in his stead. Guerrero was hurled from his seat, as we have seen, after serving not quite a year. Santa Anna and Bustamente, both emulous of the presidency, combined to defeat him, but the former was again foiled, and the more fortunate Bustamente carried off the prize. Bustamente served a little more than two years, during which time a continual series of revolutionary movements took place; at the end of this period he resigned in favor of Gen. Pedraza, the vice-president. Santa Anna now retired for awhile, in disgust, to his estate of *Mango de Clavo*, but soon put himself at the head of another revolution, which resulted in his at last seizing the presidency in 1833. From the foregoing sketch of his career, the reader can have no difficulty in deducing the character of this notorious Mexican general, become more notorious still, as

we shall see, by subsequent events. He is evidently possessed of talents of no common order, both military and administrative. Having no preference for forms of government, he but sees in their successive overthrow the means of advancing himself to power. He uses men so long as they are serviceable to him, and then casts them aside as so many puppets, unworthy of the least consideration. Fond of intrigue, subtle, and treacherous, he has outwitted all his countrymen, for a quarter of a century, and governed Mexico oftener, and with more success, than any of his cotemporaries; success being understood to mean, not the advancement of the interests and honor of his country, but the stability which he has had the tact to give to his several administrations. Although Santa Anna came into power principally under the auspices of the federal party (which was the democratic party of Mexico, the centralists being equivalent to our old federal party), he soon began to tighten the reins of government, and to show a preference for central principles, which is but another illustration of his character. Faction and turbulent men are ever wont to be mutineers when subordinates, and tyrants when masters. He constantly enlarged the executive power, at the expense of the other co-ordinate powers of the government (for it must be recollected, that during all the commotions and revolutions we have witnessed, there was nominally a constitutional government), and violated the fundamental laws with impunity. Gomez Farias, the leader of the federal party—the first civilian, by-the-by, who began to play an important part in Mexican affairs—who had come into the government with him, as vice-president, soon withdrew. At length, in 1835, Santa Anna having duly strengthened himself, and acquired the adhesion of a large party, proclaimed the dissolution of the federal, and the adoption of the central system of government. A constituent congress was called to frame a new constitution (suppliant congresses were always the ready instruments in the hands of the various revolutionary chiefs to give an apparent constitutional sanction to their acts of violence), and this latter plan of government was soon after adopted by the people and put into operation. In 1836, the invasion of Texas occurred, in which Santa Anna was defeated and captured at San Jacinto.

He returned to Mexico a few months afterward, and retired from

public affairs, for several years, during the presidency of Bustamante, who had succeeded him in the government. But the shady retreat of *Mango de Clavo* had lost all its charms for a man, who had been twenty years and more, either intriguing for, or enjoying the excitements of, power and place.

Man is so much a creature of habit that the gentler and more serene and humanizing occupations of life cease, almost entirely, to interest and content the old *habitués* of the forum and the field. Their sudden withdrawal from the active scenes in which they have spent the greater part of their lives, creates a void in their second nature, if I may so express it, which they find it impossible to fill. Hence the old politician and the old soldier are always longing alike; the one for the halls of legislation and the stormy struggle and debate, and the other for the neighing of steeds and the clashing of steel on the not less stormy and more bloody battle-field.

In the fall of 1841 there was apparently a general uprising of the Mexican people, headed by Santa Anna, Paredes, Valencia, and other distinguished chiefs, to overthrow the administration of Bustamante. The central system had become unpopular with the great mass, and the object of the people seemed to be to return to the old federal system. The garrisons, at all the principal points of the republic, *pronounced*, as is the custom on such occasions; and the government, although it held out for several months, finding itself unable to weather the storm, finally succumbed. Santa Anna and other chiefs then assembled at Tacubaya, a small village about two miles and a half from the city of Mexico, and drew up and proclaimed a series of articles, or resolutions, known as the Bases of Tacubaya. These bases were a sort of constitution *ad interim*, by which the nation was to be guided, until a constituent congress, the calling together of which was provided for in the instrument, could assemble, and carry out the wishes of the people, in regard to the new fundamental law. Santa Anna was the more fortunate of all the military chiefs who aspired to the presidency, *ad interim*, in this caucus, as the choice fell upon him. He had maneuvered so admirably, as to impress both federalists and centralists, with the belief, that he would favor their respective views, in the formation of the new government which was

about to take place. But those promises, or at least a part of them, like the promises of politicians in some countries better regulated than Mexico, were merely made for the occasion, as stepping-stones to power. When he found himself once more grasping, with a bold hand, the reins of government, he began to reflect, that the federal system would deprive him of much of the power and patronage, which he had once enjoyed under the system he had helped to explode. Under these circumstances, the reader is prepared, of course, to see him fall back upon his old central principles—if party tactics may be dignified with the name of principles. This was the case. The congress met. A new system of central government was adopted, and General Santa Anna, from president *ad interim*, became the constitutional president of the republic, which had regenerated itself by returning, like the dog, to its vomit. His administration under the new constitution continued three years, and it cannot be said that the central system was not fairly tested during this period. Like Louis XIV of France, he was emphatically the “state.” He did not content himself, as heretofore, with encroachments, merely, upon the co-ordinate branches of the government—there were, in spirit and in truth, no such branches. There was a legislature, and a judiciary, in name, it is true; but the former had become a mere register of his edicts, and the latter he prostituted and corrupted to such a degree, that it became a jest and a by-word with all classes of the citizens. Mexican justice meant, justice to the wealthy and the strong, who had the means of purchasing, or coercing it; the weak and the needy were never thought of except to be derided, and trampled upon. An edict of the president was sufficient, at any time, to abrogate or suspend an act of congress; and it was a constant habit with him, when he found himself straitened for funds, to sell the privilege of importing raw cotton and other contraband goods, for a stated time, to merchants in Vera Cruz and elsewhere; or to mortgage, as security for a loan, the anticipated receipts at a given custom-house. During all this time, republican forms were rigidly adhered to, in the dispatch of business, and the public documents were headed “*Dios y libertad*”—God and liberty.

It is not to be wondered at, that in this state of things, the more

reflecting part of the community should become alarmed for the liberties of the state, and cast about them for the means of getting rid of the tyrant. Accordingly, in the fall of 1844, a revolution, even more unanimous than that which had deprived his predecessor, Bustamente, of office, hurled him from the apparently steadfast seat of his power, and sent him, in banishment, from the country. Paredes, one of his former confederates, and who had been disappointed in not having been, himself, raised to the presidency, was the first to lead off in the series of *pronunciamientos* which preceded his downfall. A new congress being called, on the occurrence of this event, Gen. Herrera was elected president, pursuant to the forms of the constitution, and in the beginning of the following year, entered upon the duties of his office. Herrera, although possessing less talents than Santa Anna, commanded the respect of all parties, for his moderation, his probity, and well-known patriotism. If any man, at this crisis, could have poured the oil of concord upon the troubled waters of Mexico, it was undoubtedly he; but it was not in the power of any one man. He commenced his reforms, by elevating the judiciary, and by attempting, if not to excise, at least to cauterize the army, that festering sore on the body politic. Possibly, by a system of judicious measures, requiring time for their operation, he might have effected this gigantic reform, but for the peculiar state of public affairs. The question of war or peace with the United States, on the Texan controversy, was fast maturing. General Herrera, like all well-informed Mexicans, could not but see that Texas was irretrievably lost to the country, and that wisdom and patriotism both, counseled pacific measures. If the settlement of the dispute had been left to him, the war which has produced these pages would probably never have occurred; but he was not, nor could any president have been a free agent, under the circumstances then existing. As it was, he controlled the war spirit which had taken hold of his countrymen, as long as it was possible, and when this was no longer possible, he fell a sacrifice to the popular fury. In December, 1845, Gen. Paredes, then in command of the Army of the North, raised the standard of rebellion in *San Luis Potosi*, and being sustained by Vera Cruz, and other important garrisons, marched upon the capital, and took possession of the

government. It was during the administration of Paredes, that the war with the United States broke out.

We have thus glanced at some of the social relations of Mexico, and traced the principal political events of her history down to the period when our memoirs of the war commence; and it remains but to remark, that the natural consequence of these disorders, has been a demoralization and debasement of the people, to a lamentable degree. The Pretorian bands of the army have disposed of the public offices so long, that these have sunk into disrepute; being sought after, for the most part, by needy and adventurous men, with the hope of mending their broken and desperate fortunes. The several classes have become distrustful of each other, and that individual confidence of man in his fellow man, which rests upon morals, and is one of the firmest cements of well-organized societies, has ceased almost entirely to exist. Parties negotiate with each other like belligerents, in their opposite camps, and each party chieftain, while he keeps a wary eye on his antagonist, is watchful also to guard against treason at home. In short, Mexican, has become but a synonyme of Punic faith.

Having partially reviewed the social and political condition of our neighbor, let us look at his physical resources. Moral and physical causes act and re-act on each other, and consequently we must not be surprised to find agriculture and the arts—the principal bases of the wealth of nations—in a very low condition, in Mexico. One great obstacle to agricultural prosperity, we have already, incidentally, noticed—the existence of large landed estates. Although the system of entail has been destroyed, the alienation of land has been burthened to such an extent, by the imposition of the *alcabala de venta*—tax upon sale—that there has, as yet, been but little circulation given to it. The cultivation of the soil on a large scale, and by hired labor, can never be very profitable. There is, generally, too little system, and too much negligence in the processes. On small farms, on the contrary, where the farmer is himself the laborer, assisted by the members, and dependents of his own family, thrift follows the plow as a natural result. The agricultural regions of Mexico are the *tierras templadas*; and these extensive plains present none of the features



of our New England or middle-states' husbandry. Substantial farm-houses, with their neat inclosures and well-arranged fields, are nowhere seen; their places are supplied by large *haciendas*, sometimes working as many as a thousand Indians, with all the necessary organization of *administradores*, *mayordomos*, etc., and covering many square miles. Although the lands are good, and the climate one of the most favorable in the world for agricultural pursuits, there are but few of these *hacenderos*, or large farmers, who do more than balance their accounts, at the end of the year. Indeed, most of the large estates are encumbered with debts.—Another disadvantage under which the agricultural interest suffers, is the want of a market for its surplus products. In the grain-growing regions of Mexico, there are neither rivers, roads, nor canals; and on such roads as they have, transportation is carried on, in the most primitive manner, on the backs of mules and asses; wheel carriages, strange as it may appear, being almost unknown. Hence, it not unfrequently happens, that there is a famine, raging in one part of the republic, while redundant supplies are perishing for want of consumers in another. Perhaps one of the best tests of the state of agriculture in a country, is the price of lands; and this, in Mexico, is about one-fifth of what it is in the United States. The mechanic arts are in an equally depressed condition; owing, in a great measure, to the unsettled state of the country, and the insecurity of property. Where neither the arts nor agriculture flourish, there can, of course, be but little commerce.—The mines are, generally, in the hands of foreigners, and but small amounts of the precious metals remain in the country; the only benefit accruing to the government being a per centage on the metals extracted, and a duty on their exportation. As regards the general prosperity, they are of very questionable advantage.

We thus see, that Mexico, so richly endowed by nature with all those elements which should make a nation great, is, in reality, poor; her poverty arising, in a great measure, from the social and political causes we have reviewed.

The average annual expenditure of the government, for some years past, has been about twenty-five millions. The receipts, from all sources, have rarely amounted, in any one year, to more than two-thirds or three-fourths of this sum. The people, at the

same time, are struggling under a grievous load of taxation, which cripples and almost destroys many branches of industry.— Revolution and disorder obstruct and disarrange the pursuits of the country, and the mal-administration of the finances completes the general ruin. To give the reader an adequate idea, of the state of embarrassment and confusion in which General Herrera found the treasury, in 1845-'6, I cannot do better than quote from Señor Rosas, his Minister of Finance. This gentleman, in his "*Memoria de la Hacienda*," in commenting on the want of system in the administration of the affairs of his department, remarks: "I do not believe that any system of finance can be established, or that it will be possible to adjust the receipts and expenditures to each other, in a country in which each chief of a party, upon proclaiming a revolution, can seize upon the public treasure, as a spoil, and distribute it among his partisans, as though it were his private inheritance. Upon the conclusion of each civil war, the nation has been compelled both to defray the expenses of the party which has attacked the government, and those to which the government has been put to defend itself. Each civil war, too, has placed, as an additional burthen upon the treasury, a batch of new offices, rewards, and compensations, which has greatly increased the public expenditure. In each war, the chiefs have imposed new contributions, or abolished those which were established; they have changed the modes of administration; have dispensed with the collection of certain imposts, and practiced such extortions upon the people, with regard to others, as greatly to impoverish them. In each civil war, a certain number of office holders, who have had charge of the public revenues, have taken part in the revolutions, promoting and bearing the expenses of them, with the public treasure; either with a view to squander it, or to hide from observation the peculations of which they had already been guilty. Many times, powerful contrabandists have disturbed the public order, and brought about revolutions, solely with the view of running in their goods, and gaining an additional per centage upon them. During the animated discussions which precede a civil war in our country, the press has usually attacked the existing contributions, as ruinous, in order to bring them into discredit, and thus deprive the government of resources.

It is thus, that all system, and all regularity in the administration of the treasury department, has been destroyed, as a result of civil war; and it is thus, the citizens have been taught to forget the obligations they are under to contribute to the expenses of the government."

There is no species of property exempt from grievous taxation, in Mexico; there are duties on importation and exportation, on inland transportation, on production, and on consumption. The general division of these duties, is into *aranceles* and *alcabalas*; the former being the import duties on foreign articles, and the latter the duties of transit and sale on articles of either foreign or domestic origin, when taken from one point to another of the republic. To these general divisions, may be added two others of less importance; one, the tax upon lands, incomes, and occupations; and the other, the farming out, by the government, of certain monopolies. So small has been the influx of foreign population into Mexico, and so gradual the increase of the native population, that the public domain has heretofore been almost entirely unproductive; the sales of the public lands being too insignificant, to enter into the returns of the treasury department.—An eloquent comment, this, upon the misrule and anarchy which have prevailed in the country for the last forty years. Although the taxes are multiform and excessive, the actual receipts into the treasury are small; owing to the general prevalence of the contraband trade, which is a necessary result of high taxation, and to the heavy expenses of collection. Swarms of officials of every grade and capacity are to be found in all the public offices of Mexico, and particularly in the custom-houses, where a complex and ramified system of accounts prevails—thus enhancing the labor and cost of collection, and increasing the risks of fraud and peculation. All attempts to cleanse these Augean stables, by turning the stream of public opinion into them, cannot but fail, so long as each successful revolutionary chieftain brings fresh swarms with him into the government.

The running of contraband or highly dutied goods into the country, is sometimes practiced openly and shamelessly, through the bribery of the custom-house officers, whose duty it is to prevent it. Their tenure of office being brief and precarious, in

consequence of the unsettled state of the country, they, as a general rule, make the best use they can of their "opportunities." A few years ago, I was attached to a vessel of war, cruising off Tampico. Being sent to the town on some service, I took my boat's crew, at night, on board an American brig in the harbor, newly arrived from Bordeaux, that I might the better take care of them. The captain received me very cordially, and extended to me the hospitality I required. I supped with him, and being fatigued, turned in at an early hour. In the morning, he asked me if I had heard any noise during the night. I replied that I had not. Then, said he, "I did it very slick." "Did what slick?" said I. "Landed the most valuable part of my cargo, to be sure." "But what will the custom-house officers say?" "Just nothing at all, I guess. You see those seals (seals of tape and wax put on the hatches by the custom-house, at sun-set on the previous day), on the booby hatch, there (a kind of hatch, with a sliding top, which, although the top be sealed, can be removed altogether, without disturbing the seal, and thus give access to the hold); I guess they were put in the right place, by the chap I gave *two ounces* to; the seals are all right, arn't they?"

It is not the subordinates of the treasury, only, who make the best use of their "opportunities," but their masters, also. It has been quite a common practice, for years past, with the various revolutionary chieftains, who, from time to time, have seized upon the government, not only to lay their hands upon the public treasure, existing in the offices, and divide it among their subordinates, as Señor Rosa tells us, but to hypothecate, in advance, and at a ruinous discount, the public revenues, in order to supply their immediate wants, or enrich themselves and their partisans, before going out of office.

The *aranceles*, or duties levied on foreign imports, form the largest part of the Mexican revenue. The minister of finance estimated the receipts from this source, for the year 1846, at eight millions, under certain contingencies; one of which was the preservation of peace with the United States, and another, the suppression of the contraband trade. The *alcabalas*, or imposts on the internal commerce of the country, amounted to four millions one hundred and sixty thousand dollars; the tax upon lands,

incomes, and occupations, and the profits arising from monopolies, amounted to two millions three hundred thousand dollars. The most important of these monopolies, is the cultivation and manufacture of tobacco, which alone yielded one million seven hundred thousand dollars. The sale of playing cards, which is also a monopoly, yielded twenty-five thousand dollars. We have here, a gross receipt of a little over fourteen millions of dollars, from all sources. But of this sum, three millions were required to pay the interest on the national debt, amounting to about eighty millions of dollars, and other smaller sums were to be passed to the credit of the departments—formerly states—thus leaving only about ten millions, available to defray the expenses of the government during the year 1846. The estimates for the same year required twenty-four millions three hundred thousand dollars; thus leaving a deficiency of about fourteen millions! It cannot but be interesting, as well as instructive, to the reader, to compare the estimates of the several heads of departments, as follows, viz :

Minister of Foreign Relations,.....	\$529,649
“ Justice and Public Instruction,.....	394,853
“ Hacienda, or Finance,.....	1,569,893
“ War and Marine,.....	21,815,634
<hr/>	
	\$24,310,029

When we reflect that the estimate of the minister of war and marine was an ordinary peace estimate, and, by no means, based on the contingency of war, we perceive what an overshadowing influence the military power exercised in Mexico. The expenses of the navy (of which Mexico had scarcely any) form a part of this estimate; but they are so inconsiderable, as scarcely to deserve notice—amounting only to \$391,710. If we were not acquainted with Mexican history, these facts would, alone, be sufficient to enlighten us as to the real condition of the country; to teach us, in short, that it is groaning under an unmitigated military despotism. These estimates present us with several other curious facts. There is a governmental guard in our sister republic, consisting of a battalion of grenadiers, two squadrons of hussars, and a corps of Celadores, whose duty it is to escort and protect the presi-

dent and chief executive officers, and whose maintenance costs the nation upward of half a million of dollars. To us, citizens of the United States, who are accustomed to see our plain, republican president, walk abroad, not only without guards, but frequently entirely unattended, this would appear a strange item in an appropriation bill. Mexico not only pays an enormous active force, but she pensions half the nation, as retired military men.

She pays to retired officers,.....	\$505,834,00
“ “ military pensioners,.....	321,152,00
“ “ “ invalids,.....	87,968,00
	<hr/>
	\$914,454,00

The country is divided into several military commandancies, or districts, the military governors of which, with their aids and secretaries, are paid \$256,543. General and other officers attached and unattached, receive \$603,879. Of the twenty-two millions required by the minister of war and marine, for the support of the whole army, \$3,500,000 are paid exclusively to officers, and for the support of the military academy.

The total military force, immediately preceding the late war, may be stated as follows :

One battalion sappers and miners, stationed at Military Academy.

Three brigades and six companies of fixed, or stationary artillery (foot), and one brigade horse artillery.

One battalion of permanent grenadiers, as executive guard.

Eleven permanent regiments of infantry of the line, and three regiments of light infantry.

One fixed battalion, in Mexico, and another in California.

Eight companies of infantry, at various points on the coast.

Five regiments of infantry, of active militia.

Sixteen battalions of the same, in the interior.

Fourteen battalions of the same, as coast-guards.

Two permanent squadrons of hussars, as executive guards.

Two permanent squadrons of cuirassiers.

Ten regiments of permanent cavalry, including the light regiment of Mexico.

Two loose or detached squadrons of the same.

Thirty-five companies in garrison, at the various interior posts in the departments of the east and west, and in the Californias.

One company of loose or detached cavalry, in Tobasco.

Five regiments of cavalry of active militia.

Eight loose or detached squadrons of the same.

Eleven of the same, of various classes.

One loose or detached regiment, in Aguas Calientes.

Eleven loose or detached companies, in the interior departments.

Five squadrons, as coast guards.

Eight loose or detached companies, as coast guards.

Corps, as guards for hospitals (organization not stated).

Corps, as military police of the capital (organization not stated).

Estimating 1,000 men to a regiment, and supposing all the above corps to be full, we shall have, as the standing army of Mexico, the aggregate force of ninety-five thousand men of all arms, including the active militia. The active militia are paid by the government, and are kept constantly under arms; so that there is but little distinction between them and the permanent, or regular forces. There are two kinds of militia, the active and the civil—the civil militia being similar in its nature and organization to the militia of the United States. It is called out by requisitions on the governors of the states; is not kept, like the active militia, constantly under arms, and is only paid when mustered into active service.

Mexico can scarcely be said to have a navy, as we have seen by the meager estimate presented by the minister for its support. The Spanish race has no proclivity for the water. The navy of Spain, though at one time respectable, and even formidable for its numbers, has never made much of a figure in naval annals. There is an old adage, among our Anglo-Saxon cousins over the water, to the effect, that "Spaniards build forts, but Englishmen take them." This has proved eminently true of ships. The race has become no more aquatic by its transplantation to another hemisphere. Not one of the Hispano-American powers lays any stress upon commerce and a national marine, as an element of power. In 1846, Mexico possessed three steam vessels of war—one of them being good for nothing—one or two brigs laid up in

ordinary, and more or less decayed, and five or six gun-boat schooners, employed as *guarda-costas*, in the protection of the revenue. So little aptitude have the people for naval pursuits, that even this small force was partially officered and manned by Americans and other foreigners. On the eve of the war, the two available steamers were sold to a Spanish house in Havana; and when the war broke out, the only American who occupied the post of an officer, withdrew from the service, and espoused the cause of his native country.

If the reader has had the patience to follow me in the foregoing dry details, he will now have a pretty good idea of the political, social, and physical condition of our enemy. He has seen that two distinct races, between which a perfect amalgamation is perhaps yet many centuries distant—if we may reason from the past to the future—possess the soil; and that these races are divided into many classes; of very different degrees of intelligence; of various political creeds; and of many and conflicting interests. He has seen a union of church and state—a union incompatible with the interests of both—an unequal division of property, and an overweening military establishment. As a consequence of the joining together of these discordant elements, he has witnessed revolutions and civil wars, extending through thirty years; and farther, as a consequence of the latter, the wreck of the public prosperity, and the utter demoralization of the people—the former manifested by a decaying commerce, and a rude state of agriculture and the arts; and the latter, by the corruption of public men, and the general absence of sincerity and good faith among the masses. If the reader will bear in mind this condition of the republic, it will help him to account for many facts which he will find recorded in the following pages. Above all, he will have a clue wherewith to unravel the mystery of the astonishing defeats of the Mexican army—defeats imposed upon it, in many instances, by forces, numerically, so inferior, as to excite the wonder and admiration of the civilized world.



### CHAPTER III.

THE origin of the war between the United States and Mexico—The early settlement of Texas by Stephen Austin—Jealousies between the American and Mexican population—The federal system overthrown in Mexico, and a central government adopted—Zacatecas and Texas refuse to give in their adhesion to this change—Mission of Austin to the city of Mexico, and his imprisonment there—Texas declares herself independent—The massacre of Fannin, and the battle of San Jacinto—Commodore Moore and the Texan navy—The United States navy—Acknowledgment of Texan independence by the United States, and the principal powers of Europe—Negotiations and intrigues previous to annexation—Mission of Mr. Slidell and the rupture of diplomatic relations.

LET us now inquire, briefly, into the origin of the war; a portion of the events of which I propose to sketch. Nothing is more difficult, than to arrive at the true state of any question in the United States, having a political aspect. Such is the habitual rancor of politicians, that even facts are often distorted to suit party prejudices. The accounts we have of the origin of the Mexican war, is a remarkable illustration of this want of political morals, on the part of the mass of those who seek office in our country; and that politicians, with a few honorable exceptions, have descended to the position of mere office-seekers, is a fact as humiliating to our pride, as it is obvious to our senses. Grave books, purporting to be histories, written long after the events they record have transpired, do but reproduce these garbled statements, in a more enduring form, unpurged of the party taint to which they have been subjected, by the *accusatio falsi*, as well as the *suppressio veri*.

Not being a politician, and having heard both parties, I will endeavor to give a succinct narrative of the circumstances which preceded the Mexican war, without reference to either. As "history is philosophy teaching by example," I shall endeavor not to spoil the philosophy, by falsifying the example.

In 1819, when our treaty with Spain was made, adopting the Sabine as the western boundary of the United States, Texas was a comparative wilderness, almost entirely unknown to our people. Soon afterward, Mexico, becoming independent of Spain, adopted, as we have seen, a constitution almost identical with that of the United States, except that it established a religion of state, and excluded all other sects; and in further imitation of our policy, passed sundry laws to encourage colonization within her limits. Lands were given to colonists on conditions of easy fulfillment; and other inducements were held out to immigration. These laws soon attracted the attention of Stephen Austin, an American citizen, who having applied for, and received a liberal grant of lands in Texas, emigrated thither with his family, accompanied by a considerable number of other colonists. So little attention was given to these proceedings in the United States,—so pregnant with events—that the only notice we had of them, was an occasional newspaper paragraph, announcing the sailing of colonists, or describing the rich lands of Texas, etc. No one gave more than a passing thought to Stephen Austin and his colony. There can be no question, I think, that this immigration was in perfect good faith, on the part of the colonists. And why should it not have been? Mexico was a federal republic—the several states choosing their own rulers, framing their own laws, and managing all their local concerns, precisely as did the states of the American Union. In passing, therefore, from one country to the other, there was no violence done (save in the matter of religion) to the political creed of the colonists; nor any restraints imposed upon them but such as they had already been taught to submit to at home. Our people had warmly sympathized with Mexico, in her struggle for liberty; there was, at the time, no thought of extending our territory in that direction; and the colonists were, for the most part, needy, but adventurous men; who were rather in pursuit of easier and more abundant means of living, than in quest of honors and empire. As a proof of this, they settled themselves quietly, in their new homes, and we scarcely hear of them, for some years afterward. But the harmony which should have subsisted between them and the Mexican people, on account of the similarity of the political institution of the two countries, was not of long duration. Being of a

different, and I think we may say, without vanity, of a superior race, so far as practical civilization is concerned, they soon began to make their weight felt in local affairs. This necessarily excited against them, as foreigners, the prejudices of the native population. These prejudices were transferred to the capital, and whispered into the ear of the federal government; and the consequence was, that in 1830, an act of congress was passed, prohibiting the further immigration of American citizens. Still, but for the political events which will be hereafter mentioned, there can be but little doubt, that harmony, to a greater or less extent, would have been preserved; and probably, in a generation or two, the radical differences of the two races would entirely have disappeared—the flaxen hair and the blue eye of the Anglo-Saxon taking a darker shade, and more brilliant light, from the Hispano-Mexican. We should thus have conquered Texas—and ultimately all Mexico—as Greece conquered Rome, by civilization and the arts, instead of the sword.

The reader has seen, in the preceding pages, the state of almost constant revolution in which Mexico has been involved, since the commencement of her career as an independent nation. Texas makes no figure, in any of these civil tumults, until 1832. In that year, Santa Anna having *pronounced* against the government, at Vera Cruz, there was some opposition made to him in Texas, and some disorders ensued in consequence. In 1834, Señor Estrada, minister of foreign relations, speaks of Texas, in his annual report, as follows: “The colonies of Texas, which, about the middle of the year 1832, were thrown into some excitement in consequence of the *pronunciamiento* of Vera Cruz, of the second of February of that year, returned immediately to order; and up to this moment have remained in tranquillity. The government of the state of Coahuila and Texas has adopted some measures beneficial to the inhabitants of that vast territory; and the legislature has passed some laws which cannot but tend to the preservation of peace; such are, the establishment of the trial by jury, the appointment of judges of First Instance, and the organization of a Court of Appeals. The general government, which has always regarded its colonies with interest, and has given them many proofs of its paternal regard, dispatched, in the beginning of the

last year, an agent to Texas, to examine into the condition of the inhabitants, inquire into their necessities, etc. This agent has recently returned, and has given the government much detailed information in regard to the actual state of the country; and I shall have the honor, in consequence, of presenting to congress, at a proper moment, the *projets* of certain laws which the government deems indispensable to the development of the resources of the country, and to the security of the territory of the republic. In the meantime, the actual condition of the colonists is satisfactory. There are already in Texas about *twenty-one thousand* inhabitants. It carries on a commerce of one million, four hundred thousand dollars; and one of its principal rivers has begun to be navigated by steam. The government hopes that congress will give its early attention to the measures it recommends, and which it does not doubt will increase the prosperity, and *secure to the republic forever*, the possession of one of its richest and most beautiful provinces." When we recollect that this state paper was dictated, if not by, at least under the eye of, Santa Anna, we cannot be at a loss to imagine what kind of an agent (whose name is not made public) had recently returned from Texas, and what was the nature of the *paternal* measures the president had in store for the Americo-Mexican colonists, who had already shown some opposition to his high-handed administration.

In 1835, Santa Anna having declared the congress then in session, an illegal body, and turned it out of its halls, called together a new congress, which, under his dictation, declared the federal government at an end, and adopted a new constitution on the central plan.

In the meantime, Texas having increased rapidly in population and wealth, in consequence of the impetus given her by American emigration, resolved to avail herself of the privilege guaranteed to her by the constitution of 1824, and seek to enter the Mexican confederacy as a state. Pursuing the requisite constitutional forms, she assembled a convention, adopted a constitution, and sent Stephen Austin to the capital to demand her admission. Austin was not only treated with contumely, but thrown into prison; where he was kept nearly a year. The Texans, upon the receipt of the intelligence of the overthrow of the federal govern-

ment, and of the imprisonment of their agent, first attacked and defeated a small party of Mexicans, at a town called Gonzales, and then assembled in convention at Austin, and declared the social compact which had bound them to Mexico, dissolved.

On the second of March, 1846, they met again in convention at Washington, on the Brazos; and having more formally declared their independence of the now central government, adopted a constitution, and immediately organized a government under it. The state of Zacatecas, following the example of Texas, refused also to acknowledge the central government. The population of this state, amounting to three hundred thousand, was the most warlike of Mexico. It maintained, constantly, a force of twenty thousand active militia—a force, as organized, little inferior to regular troops—and had corresponding magazines, well supplied with provisions and other munitions of war. It possessed twenty-five pieces of artillery,—mostly of large caliber,—and had constructed an extensive fortification in the state capital. Having consolidated, somewhat, his usurped power, Santa Anna marched upon this state, and after a short resistance, succeeded in reducing it to obedience, shorn of its state honors, and compelled to occupy the humble position of a department.

The central chief now turned his victorious army, consisting of twenty thousand well equipped troops, upon Texas. Having assumed the command in person, he entered that territory early in the year 1836, resolved to chastise, in a summary and exemplary manner, a set of rebels, who, on more than one occasion, had defied his authority, and who had recently denounced him as an usurper. At this period, the Texans being already in arms to defend themselves, Colonel Fannin, one of the chiefs of the revolution, with about five hundred men, happened to be at the town of Goliad. Hearing of the approach of a numerous Mexican army, and finding himself beyond supporting distance from the main body of his countrymen, and being entirely without supplies, he commenced a retreat. In the meantime, General Santa Anna dispatched General Urrea, his chief of cavalry, in pursuit. Col. Fannin had not proceeded far, when suddenly he found himself in the midst of an extensive plain, and menaced by a large column of cavalry. General Urrea, instead of charging him with his over-

whelmily superior force, resorted, *à la Mexicana*, to stratagem. A white flag being displayed, the two detachments halted, and a parley ensued. The wily Mexican promised Fannin, that if he would lay down his arms, and surrender himself prisoner of war, he should be sent, with all his men, to the United States. Fannin acceding to the proposition, the capitulation was reduced to writing, and signed by both parties. The surrender took place accordingly, and the prisoners were marched back to the town of Goliad.

Very soon afterward, it was rumored in the United States that Colonel Fannin, with all his men, had been massacred, and that Santa Anna, with an army of twenty thousand choice troops, had been beaten at San Jacinto, by a few hundred Texans, and himself made prisoner. As I have before remarked, up to this period, very little attention had been given to Texas and Texan affairs, by the people of the United States; but these two pieces of astounding intelligence, created a great sensation in the public mind. At first, the massacre of Fannin was doubted. Our citizens could not credit the fact that such an atrocity had been perpetrated by a civilized people; that a flag of truce had been violated; a solemn convention disregarded, and five hundred men, who had been induced to lay down their arms, in apparent good faith, had been butchered in cold blood! But the intelligence proved to be too correct. It was soon ascertained that General Urrea, by order of Santa Anna, had deliberately led out the command of the gallant and unfortunate Fannin, and shot every man of them, including their chief! The battle of San Jacinto was fought on the 21st April, 1836, and resulted as I have stated; the Mexican army being totally routed and dispersed, and vast numbers of it killed. General Samuel Houston, who commanded the gallant Texans on this occasion, found great difficulty in preventing his men from tearing the perfidious Santa Anna in pieces; and under the circumstances, we cannot but regard this second victory as greater than the first, inasmuch as it was a victory of the victors over themselves. Civilization triumphed, however, and the captive chief has lived to fill many more pages of history, as we shall see. In the massacre of Fannin was commenced that war of the two races, which can end only in the destruction of the weaker; I

say, in the massacre of Fannin, because the previous small affair of Gonzales attracted no notice, and aroused no bad passions. If, after this piece of treachery, Texas had needed a hundred thousand armed men to defend her liberties, she could have had them from all parts of the United States; so exasperated had men's minds become. As it was, great numbers of ardent and enthusiastic young men—many of them of the best families of the country—rushed to the rescue of their relatives and friends; and thus the blood of Fannin, crying aloud, as it were, for vengeance, trebled and quadrupled the numbers in the Texan camp. But a camp was no longer necessary—the war of independence had been ended almost as soon as begun, and at a single blow. I have said that the massacre of Fannin was the commencement of a *war of races*. A few reflections, which naturally arise out of the circumstances, will convince us that the Mexicans, at least, so regarded it. In the suppression of the revolt of Zacatecas, which was precisely similar to that of Texas, and in the thousand other revolutionary struggles, which have occurred among the Mexicans proper, we have witnessed no parallel atrocity. With now and then an exception, the rebels or *pronunciados* have been treated with lenity, and exchanged or set at liberty as ordinary prisoners of war. But the offshoot of the Anglo-American race, which had radicated itself in Mexico, and had already begun to show its superiority to the native population, it had become necessary to root out. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, was the motto of Santa Anna, and he was resolved that the barbarians should be driven back beyond the Sabine, and no further colonization from that quarter permitted.

There is no feud so bitter as one between unequals—that is to say, between men who are unequal in a moral or intellectual sense. The inferior, in every such contest, is constantly measuring himself with his superior, to his own disadvantage. He hates the qualities he can never hope to imitate, and in proportion as his self-love is wounded, are his bad passions aroused. Such was the feud which had arisen between the Mexican and American colonist; a feud still further imbittered by the radical difference between the two races, in manners and customs and modes of thought.

The Texans having driven back their invaders, and freed themselves from an unnatural connection, naturally turned their thoughts toward the United States. They had weakened, perhaps, but not severed that mysterious link which binds a man forever to his native land; particularly if that land be enshrined in his heart, as the home of freedom. They petitioned the government to acknowledge their independence, and annex them to the United States. General Jackson, who was then president of the United States, addressed a communication to congress on the subject, in which he recommended that we should not change our attitude toward them, until Mexico herself, or some one of the other principal powers, should recognize their independence; or at least, until the lapse of time and the course of events, should place beyond doubt, their ability to maintain the position they had assumed.— In other words, he re-affirmed the well-known doctrine of the United States, in such cases—to the effect, that a revolutionary government, or a government *de facto*, must give to itself a reasonable degree of firmness and stability, before it can be recognized. This Texas effectually did, in the course of the next few years. She not only made good a defensive position; she did more; she built and equipped a fleet; and giving her “lone star” proudly to the breeze, under the guidance of the gallant Commodore Moore, drove her enemy’s cruisers from the sea, and shut up his ports. While Mexico continued to be convulsed and rent with new revolutions, the young republic pursued the even tenor of its way, in internal peace and prosperity. To show the relative conditions of the two countries, in 1842, I quote the following language of Mr. Webster, secretary of state of the United States, to Señor Bocanegra, minister of foreign relations of Mexico: “Since the battle of San Jacinto, in April 1836, to the present moment, Texas has given as many proofs of national independence, as Mexico herself, and has possessed quite as much stability of government. Free and independent in fact, her political sovereignty recognized by the principal powers of the world, no hostile foot has found a resting-place within her territory, during the last six or seven years; and Mexico herself has abstained, during all this time, from any new attempt to establish her authority in this territory.”



At length, the time having arrived when the independence of Texas became an established fact, she was admitted by the United States, Great Britain, France, and other powers, into the fraternity of nations. This result, accomplished in so short a time, was almost wholly the work of the gallant little navy, which, with consummate judgment, she had set herself about creating, from the first days of her revolution. The population of Mexico is concentrated on the great table lands, on which the capital occupies a central position, and in the *tierras calientes* adjacent. The five or six hundred miles intervening between this thickly settled region and the Rio Grande, are almost an unbroken wilderness, having but a scanty population, and few resources for the maintenance of an army. The district of country between San Luis Potosi and Saltillo, a march of five or six days, is an arid desert, not even affording water, in many places, to the parched and travel-worn soldier. It was almost a physical impossibility, therefore, for Mexico to carry on a war of any duration against Texas, by land. But what if the sea had been open to her? The result might have been very different, and the United States, instead of being the giant empire she is, might still be circumscribed, on the south and west, by the Sabine; content to delay her great march of progress, many years yet. History will bear me out, when I affirm, that next to General Houston, the hero of San Jacinto, Texas owes more to Commodore Moore than to any other man who has figured in the drama of her revolution. With an energy and ability possessed by but few men, he took hold of the discordant materials which Texas was collecting for the formation of a navy (a work, generally, of time and much patient toil), reduced them to system and order, and presented to the world the spectacle of a well-organized marine, bearing the flag of a republic, not four years old! In 1840, when President Santa Anna declared the coast of the rebellious republic in a state of blockade, the gallant Texan commodore put to sea; and not only prevented the enemy from attempting to enforce his blockade, but proceeded off his principal port (Vera Cruz), and blockaded him instead. The whole Mexican coast was scoured by his little squadron, consisting of a sloop of war, a steamer, and three or four schooners, and several captures were made. He not only kept the coast in

a state of constant alarm, but proceeded up the river Tobasco ; captured the town of that name, which he retained possession of, for three weeks, and levied a contribution on the people, which enabled him to support his squadron, for nearly a year, without drawing a dollar from the public treasury ! Subsequently, he entered into a league with Yucatan, which gave much alarm and concern to Mexico, and from which, among other advantages, resulted the no inconsiderable one, of his being able, still further to support his squadron, without expense to his then impoverished country. He engaged and beat off the enemy's squadron (consisting of two heavy steamers and other vessels), of much superior force ; and, in short, by his gallantry, energy, and judgment, caused Mexico, in the language of Mr. Webster, to abstain "during all this time, from any new attempt to establish her authority in this territory."

The reader will pardon me, if I pause to make a remark here, not strictly relevant to my subject. This gallant officer, to whom Texas owes so much, was shamefully neglected, in the treaty of annexation. He had been bred in the naval service of the United States, and should have been returned to this service, as the least reward that could have been bestowed upon him, for the gallant and able services he had rendered. He had been involved in some difficulties, it is true, with the authorities of Texas, but it is precisely through those difficulties, that I see him in the most enviable light. He bore himself through the whole of them, as a high-minded, honorable officer, who not only had the interest of his country at heart, but understood it, and served it, much better than those who differed with him in opinion. He maintained a discipline in his squadron, which none but a man of firmness and courage could have maintained ; and caused the flag of Texas, not only to be feared by its enemies, but respected by neutrals.— It is to be hoped, that our own government will speedily make amends to this gallant man, for the neglect with which he has been treated by Texas. Now that Texas is a portion of our territory, any services which may have been rendered to her, have, in fact, been rendered to us. It has been objected that Commodore Moore abandoned his own service, to enter that of a foreign state ; and that this should prevent him from returning. How

shallow must be the reasoning founded on such an objection!—This is, on the contrary, one of the strongest arguments why he should come back; since, instead of being a drone, content to grow fat, and idle away his existence in the lap of peace, it shows him to have been a man of boldness and enterprise, worthy of the profession in which he had been trained, and a servant to be sought after, if the interests of the government are to be considered. In becoming a Texan, he did not cease to be an American—the Texans were all Americans.

It is our policy, not only to introduce Commodore Moore into the navy, but to make a great many other Commodore Moores. We of the naval service are dead—dead of old age and decrepitude; and it is the cry of seniority—the cry which has kept Moore out of the navy, he having the undoubted right to come in, as a captain—which has killed us; that preposterous cry which insists that a man's years, and not his brains, should be the test of promotion and employment. A more perfect system could not have been invented, by our worst enemies, if their object had been to destroy us. It dampens hope, it stifles talent, it cripples energy; in short, it draws no distinction, whatever, between excellence and mediocrity, but reduces all to the dull and stagnant level of idleness, and consequent ignorance and worthlessness. If there are clever and intelligent officers in the navy, it is because they are so, despite of the system under which they live, and not by reason of it. Excess of appointments, in the grade of midshipmen, and seniority, have done, and are doing, their work; but what cares the politician? his son, or his *protégé*, must be got into the navy, and when there—why, he is disposed of!

Texas, although she had now become one of the independent powers of the earth, did not abandon her design of finally entering the American Union. The question of annexation was frequently presented to the United States, by her diplomatic agents; and as often postponed, by our government, for prudential reasons. In the meantime, there began to be formed, in Texas, a party favorable to separate independence. Great Britain and France, both anxious to intermeddle with the affairs of our continent, and to preserve, as they had done in Europe, something like a “ba-

lance of power," took active measures to forward the views and stimulate the interests of this party. Beside circumscribing her great commercial rival, within narrower limits, Great Britain hoped to derive some profit and advantage from a treaty with Texas, by which the latter should become a kind of commercial and political dependent, in consideration of protection. Another prime object with her was, to place on our southern border, an independent free state, which should attack from that quarter the slave institution of the south, while her emissaries were carrying on the war in the north. Although Great Britain, when questioned on this point, by the administration of President Tyler, denied any *official* interference with the affairs of Texas, she distinctly answered, that she should use all the moral means in her power, to accomplish her object. Here is the language of Lord Aberdeen: "With regard to Texas, we avow, that we wish to see slavery abolished *there*, or *elsewhere*; and we *should rejoice* if the recognition of that country by the Mexican government, should be accompanied by an engagement, on the part of Texas, to abolish slavery, and under proper conditions, throughout the republic. But, although we earnestly desire, and *feel it to be our duty*, to promote such a consummation, we shall not interfere unduly, or with an improper assumption of authority, with either party, in order to insure the adoption of such a course. *We shall counsel*, but we shall not seek to compel or unduly control either party." It was not without reason, therefore, that subsequently, when a treaty of annexation had been signed, Mr. Calhoun—secretary of state—advised our chargé d'affaires, in Mexico: "That the step had been forced on the government of the United States, in self-defense, in consequence of the policy adopted by Great Britain, in reference to the abolition of slavery in Texas." The anti-annexation party, notwithstanding these intrigues of Great Britain and France, did not make much progress, however. The Texan people were true Americans at heart, and longed, with all the yearning of the exile, to be restored to the great republican family, from which fortune had for a short period separated them. For awhile, negotiations were actively carried on by Texas, with Great Britain, France, and Mexico, all at the same time; the objects of which, on the part of the three latter powers, were some-

what diverse ; but they all agreed in one point, and that was the prevention of Texas from falling into the hands of the United States. Mexico was, at first, inconsolable for her loss, and refused to speak of Texas except as one of her departments.— But when she, at length, became convinced of her own inability to re-subjugate her, and found, after the display of some duplicity on the part of her *quasi* allies, that neither of them was willing to assist her, in so perilous an undertaking, she became more calm ; and when she found that a treaty of annexation had actually been signed, between the American and Texan commissioners, she consented to receive commissioners from her late department (a proposition to that effect, having been previously made by the executive of Texas), to treat of peace ; Señor Cuevas, the minister of foreign relations, declaring, by authority of congress (given in the act of 19th May, 1845), that “ The supreme government will receive the four above-mentioned articles, as preliminaries to a formal and definite treaty, and is disposed to enter into negotiations, as Texas desires, and to receive the commissioners she has named for that purpose.” The first of these four articles was, that “ Mexico consents to recognize the independence of Texas ;” and by the second, Texas consented to stipulate in the treaty, that she would not annex herself to the United States.

Vengeance is as dear to the heart of a nation, as to that of an individual : and when Mexico found that she could no longer wreak hers upon Texas, she endeavored to strike a blow at the United States, for what she called, our fraudulent attempts to wrest one of her provinces from her.

But in reviewing these *quartu-partite* intrigues, we have gone a little ahead of events, as regards our share in the transaction. The question of annexation having been discussed in the newspapers long before the act was consummated, the Mexican government took an early opportunity to notify our minister in that country, that it would regard the annexation of Texas as a *casus belli*. Señor Bocanegra, in a letter to Mr. Waddy Thompson, dated on the 23d August, 1843, uses this language :—“ And if a party in Texas is now endeavoring to effect its incorporation with the United States, it is from a consciousness of their notorious incapability to form and constitute an independent nation, without their having

changed their situation, or acquired any right to separate themselves from their mother country. His excellency, the provincial president, resting on this deep conviction, is obliged to prevent an aggression, unprecedented in the annals of the world, from being consummated; and if it be indispensable for the Mexican nation to seek security for its rights, at the expense of the disasters of war, it will call upon God, and rely on its own efforts for the defense of its just cause." General Almonte, the Mexican minister in the United States, reiterated this threat a short time afterward, in a letter to Mr. Upshur, secretary of state. He says, "that on sanction being given by the Executive of the United States, to the incorporation of Texas into the United States, he will consider his mission ended; seeing that, as the secretary of state will have learned, the Mexican government is resolved to *declare war*, as soon as it receives intimation of such an act." Notwithstanding these declarations on the part of Mexico, on the 12th of April, 1844, a treaty of annexation was signed between Mr. Calhoun, secretary of state, and Messrs. Vanzandt and Henderson, Texan commissioners. On the 22d of the same month, President Tyler submitted this treaty to the senate for ratification. Although the country was ripe for the measure, the treaty was rejected—some senators being dissatisfied with the measure itself; others with the manner of its accomplishment; and others still, because they were opposed to the administration of Mr. Tyler; and, like faithful politicians, were bound to strive for the good of their party—otherwise they might not be returned to the senate, when another election came round.

There was much difference of opinion, too, on the subject, among the people. Some thought our territory already sufficiently large. Reasoning from historical examples, they feared to give it more extension, lest, like the Roman empire, and that of Alexander, it might tumble in pieces; forgetting that our system was wholly unlike the central governments with which they compared it. When all the laws, as well local as general, emanate from a common center, whence proceeds, also, the executive and judicial administration of them, extension of system beyond certain limits, is unquestionably death. But where the federal system prevails, in which each state, or division of the system, is a commonwealth

in itself, enacting its own laws, and executing them (in subordination to certain well established principles of the confederacy), without let or hindrance, from any superior power, extension is life. For while the federal executive power, unlike the central power of which we have been speaking, is rather strengthened than weakened by the extension, the individual importance of the states is diminished. Without losing any portion of their qualified sovereignty, they become less capable, either singly, or in combination with others, to disturb the harmony of the system. In the old confederacy of thirteen, New York, in combination with one or two of the larger states, could effectually have destroyed the smaller ones ; but where the federative system shall extend over fifty or a hundred states, there can be no *empire states* to exercise a predominating influence over the rest. Other citizens were opposed to the measure under discussion, because they could find no warrant for it in the constitution. They could not consent to give to the treaty-making power the right to annex foreign territory ; although, inasmuch as treaties are made to settle difficulties with foreign nations at the conclusion of wars, and as the conquest of territory is one of the most natural consequences of these, it would seem to be one of its most necessary incidents.

But the presidential contest which soon after took place, speedily disposed of the matter. In November, 1844, Mr. Polk was elected president, and one of the principal issues made before the people, was the question of annexation—Mr. Polk favoring the measure. In obedience to the will of the people, thus expressed, congress, on the 1st of March, 1845, three days before the expiration of the term of President Tyler, passed a joint resolution, giving its consent, that the territory, “rightfully belonging to the republic of Texas,” might be erected into a new state, called the state of Texas ; “all questions of boundary that may arise with other governments,” being left to be settled by the government of the United States. On the 4th of July, 1845, a convention of the people of Texas accepted the terms of union proposed in this resolution, with remarkable unanimity, there being but one dissenting voice in the whole assembly. A state constitution was formed, in compliance with the requirements of the federal fundamental law, and at the next session of congress, Texas was for-

mally admitted, as a state, into the American Union. Throughout the whole of this proceeding, the government of the United States acted toward Mexico with the utmost kindness and consideration. In April, 1844, immediately upon the signing of the convention, Mr. Calhoun sent a special messenger to Mexico, with dispatches for our chargé, Mr. Benjamin E. Green, instructing him to inform the Mexican government of what had occurred, and to assure it of our earnest desire to continue the friendly relations which happily existed between the two nations. As I commanded the small steamer in which this messenger was conveyed to Vera Cruz, and upon my arrival at this port, accompanied the messenger to the city of Mexico, I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the temper and feelings of the country on the occasion. The great mass of the inhabitants, which I have described, in a previous chapter, as constituting four-fifths of the population, neither knew nor cared anything about the matter. But the utmost exasperation prevailed among most of the other classes, and particularly among the military. The annexation of Texas was denounced by them, as indeed it was by the government—as a robbery unparalleled in the annals of nations, and one which merited, and should receive, a severe chastisement. They boasted, boldly, of their ability to drive us back beyond the Sabine, and in their ignorance and vanity, I have no doubt, many of them believed the boast.

Santa Anna was, at this time, at the head of the government, and through Señor Bocanegra, his minister of foreign relations, declared to Mr. Green, as he had previously done to Mr. Waddy Thompson, that he would regard the consummation of the measure of annexation as a *casus belli*. In 1845, after the passage of the joint resolution, Señor Almonte, in accordance with his previous announcement, demanded his passports and withdrew from the country. Mr. Green was also withdrawn, by our government, from Mexico; and thus all diplomatic intercourse ceased.

In this state of things, Mexico began to prepare and marshal her forces, and in August, 1845, General Taylor, in obedience to previous orders from the government, took post at Corpus Christi, on Aransas bay, with about 4,000 troops. Commodore Stockton, with the steamer Princeton, sloop of war, St. Mary's, and two es



three smaller vessels, also made his appearance off Galveston, about the same time.

The United States, notwithstanding the threats and military preparations of Mexico, were still unwilling to push matters to extremity. They resolved to try the effect of another attempt at negotiation, and for this purpose directed Mr. Black, our consul in the city of Mexico, to ascertain whether the Mexican government would consent to receive a commissioner, "invested with full powers to settle all the questions in dispute between the two governments." In answer to Mr. Black's note of inquiry, the Mexican government replied that, "it was disposed to receive the commissioner who should come to this capital from the United States, with full powers from his government to settle, in a pacific, reasonable and decorous manner, the present contest, provided the naval forces of the United States be withdrawn from before its ports." On the receipt of this answer by the secretary of state at Washington, Mr. Polk immediately appointed Mr. John Slidell, of Louisiana, envoy to Mexico, with the full powers described. He embarked on board the sloop of war *St. Mary's*, at Pensacola, and arrived at Vera Cruz about the 1st December. He immediately started, *en route*, for the city of Mexico, but was met at Puebla by Mr. Black, who, having ascertained that the Mexican government had changed its mind in regard to Mr. Slidell's reception, hastened to give him the first intelligence of it. Mr. Slidell, nevertheless, continued his journey, and on the 8th December, addressed a note to Señor Peña y Peña, the minister of foreign relations, officially announcing his presence, and desiring to know when it would be convenient for the government to receive him. Señor Peña y Peña replied to him, that he could not be received, as an envoy invested with full powers, to treat on *all the subjects in dispute* between the two nations, inasmuch as the Mexican government had only consented to receive a commissioner with full powers to settle, amicably, the *present contest*! A piece of special pleading, worthy only of a Mexican jurist, as Señor Peña y Peña was. The facts are, that General Herrera (who had succeeded Santa Anna as president by one of those revolutions, of which the country is so prolific), being really desirous of peace, had hoped, when he made the promise he did to Mr. Black, to be

able to receive a minister and settle all matters amicably; but in the interval between that promise and Mr. Slidell's arrival, the war fever had made so much progress in Mexico, that it would have been dangerous for any administration to attempt to arrest it. The press had already begun to denounce his inaction, and to accuse him of an intention to sacrifice the honor of the republic by renewing friendly relations with the United States. This clamor increased, upon Mr. Slidell's arrival; and looking to the preservation of his office, it would have been exceedingly impolitic in President Herrera to have received him.

Such are the belligerent propensities of our nature, that the most popular of all questions, in any nation which fancies it has received an insult, is the war question. It feeds our desire for revenge, at the same time that it administers to our pride and ambition. Politicians seize upon it, as a powerful lever wherewith to move the popular passions; and even more honest and reflecting men, whose judgments condemn the measure, are swept away by the torrent, despite themselves. In a country like Mexico, but little more than half civilized (I speak of the masses), and with an overshadowing military establishment, where almost every change of seasons ushers in a change of rulers, by violence and sometimes by bloodshed, it is not to be wondered at, that this question became the great touchstone for office. General Herrera was forced to yield to the storm, and to temporize, in order to save himself; hence the unworthy subterfuge practiced, perhaps for the first time in the diplomacy of nations, of objecting, not to the *want of*, but to the *excess* of power in a negotiator; this objection being founded too, as it evidently was, upon a mere quibble about words. General Herrera's efforts to save himself, however, were unavailing; as all temporizing generally is. An arch enemy had already shown himself in General Paredes. This gentleman, who was possessed of clever military talents, but who was a mere soldier, had been selected to command the army of the north, the head-quarters of which were at San Luis Potosi, with the view of invading the United States, and executing the Mexican boast, of driving us back beyond the Sabine; but with usual Mexican perfidy, he preferred turning his arms against the president who had conferred on him this honorable distinction. He raised the stand-

ard of revolt on the 29th December, 1845; and early in the following month, he was ushered into the city of Mexico at the head of his *legions of Texan invaders*.

Notwithstanding this change of administration was effected for the avowed purpose of putting the control of the government into the hands of the war party, President Polk did not suffer his patience to be wearied. Mr. Slidell was directed to withdraw from the Mexican capital to some other city of the republic, and thence to propose, again, his reception to the new administration. He retired to Jalapa, and from that place, in a note addressed to Señor Castillo y Lanzas, the new minister of foreign relations, of the date of the 1st March, 1846, nearly four months after his mission had been rejected by General Herrera, he renewed the overtures as directed by the president. In explaining the views of our government, he uses the following language: "The president of the United States approves entirely of the course pursued by the undersigned, and of the communications which he has directed to the Mexican government. If the same administration had continued in power, which then existed, as there would have been no alternative, he would have directed the undersigned to have demanded his passports; and the president of the United States would have made known to congress what had occurred, and appealed to the nation to vindicate its just rights, and revenge its outraged honor. But the destinies of the republic having been entrusted, since then, to other hands, the president does not wish to adopt a course which would inevitably lead to war, without making another effort to prevent so great a calamity; he wishes to exhaust all honorable means of conciliation, in order to manifest to the civilized world, should its peace be disturbed, that the responsibility should rest upon Mexico alone. He desires, sincerely, to preserve peace; but the state of *quasi* hostility which Mexico observes, is incompatible with the dignity and the interests of the United States; and it belongs to the Mexican government to decide, whether she will substitute for it a friendly negotiation, or bring about an open rupture." To this note, Señor Castillo y Lanzas replied, on the 12th of the same month, in a lengthy dispatch, of which the following extracts form a part:

"Immediately upon your dispatch being placed in the hands

of the undersigned, he laid it before the president *ad interim*, who, having informed himself of its contents, and given to the subject mature consideration, has directed the undersigned to inform Mr. Slidell, in reply, as he now has the honor of doing, that the Mexican government cannot receive him as an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, to reside near this government. \* \* \* \*

"From the foregoing, it follows, that if war is inevitable, and that if, as a consequence of this, the peace of the civilized nations of the world is interrupted, the responsibility will not rest upon Mexico, but exclusively upon the United States. Not upon Mexico, who permitted, with a generosity unequaled, American citizens to colonize themselves in Texas; but upon the United States, who encouraged emigration to it, with the view, that in due time, the colonists should be converted into inhabitants and owners of the territory; and, claiming it as their own, should go over with it to the United States. Not upon Mexico, who having protested, opportunely, against so enormous an outrage, endeavored to remove all cause of dispute and hostility; but upon the United States, who, to the scandal of the world, and the manifest infraction of treaties, gave protection and aid to the guilty parties to so wicked a rebellion. Not upon Mexico, who, though laboring under great and repeated wrongs, has consented to receive conciliatory propositions; but upon the United States, who, protesting a sincere desire for an honorable and friendly arrangement, has, by her acts, given the lie to these propositions. Finally, not upon Mexico, who, consenting to lose sight of her dearest interests, for the sake of peace, has waited, as long as has been required of her, to receive the propositions which were to be made to this end; but upon the United States, who, with frivolous pretenses, evades compliance with this arrangement; proposing peace, at the same time that she marshals her squadrons in her ports, and advances troops to the frontier, and exacts an impossible humiliation, that she may find a *pretext*, if not a cause, for commencing hostilities." The idea expressed in this letter, that a probable consequence of a war between Mexico and the United States, would be "an interruption of the peace of the civilized nations of the world," evidently points to some aid expected by Mexico, from one or more, other powers, and gives color to the suspicion, that up to the last mo-

ment, either England or France (who had both been intriguing in the affair, as we have seen), or perhaps both of them, had deluded the Mexican government with the hope of assistance. But when the time for help arrived, they both, as mischief-makers are wont to do, stood quietly in the background, and suffered their victim to be overwhelmed. Mr. Slidell rejoined to Señor Castillo y Lanzas, in an elaborate and eloquent exposition of the ground assumed by the United States in the contest, and demanded his passports; which being furnished him, he descended to Vera Cruz, and embarked for the United States. This closed all negotiation on the subject.

## CHAPTER IV.

**MARCH** of General Taylor from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande—Proclamation of the Mexican president—The occurrences which led to the war briefly recapitulated—The march of our race southward—Commencement of hostilities—The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—Results of these battles—The commanding generals, on both sides, afterward made presidents of their respective countries—Naval operations in the Gulf of Mexico—Enemy's coast blockaded—Liberal principles of the blockade—Nature of the enemy's coast, and the difficulties encountered by the navy in operating upon it—The sloop-of-war *St. Mary's*, and the steamer *Princeton*.

In the meantime, General Taylor had been ordered to advance to the Rio Grande, and take up a position opposite to Matamoros. Early in March, Commodore Conner dispatched a couple of small vessels, to assist in the movement, and to convoy the transports, from Aransas Bay to the Brazos. On the 8th of the same month, General Taylor commenced his march, and arrived, in a few days, at his post, without opposition. Being attached to one of the small vessels above mentioned, I was lying off the Brazos, when the advance column made its appearance at that point, and witnessed the firing, by the Mexicans, of their custom-house and other buildings, as they retired before the army.

On the same day on which Mr. Slidell's passports were inclosed to him, viz: on the 21st March, President Paredes issued a proclamation, from which the following extracts are taken:

"In these critical and solemn moments, when the nation is on the point of a war with the United States, in consequence of one of the most unjust usurpations recorded in history, it becomes my urgent and sacred duty, to make an exposition to my fellow-citizens, of the circumstances in which we are placed: the risk which these circumstances impose, and the obligations we are under to sustain with valor, enthusiasm, and decision, those rights, which being identified with the existence of nations, must be defended

at all hazards, and with energy proportioned to the wrong received.

“The dignity of the nation, the march of an American army upon the river Bravo del Norte, where the head-quarters of our troops are situated; the threatening presence of the squadrons of that nation, in both seas; and all those antecedents which are well known to the civilized world, have obliged me, not to receive the minister plenipotentiary of the said United States of America; in order that I might not, by a pernicious and ill-considered act, give an example of weakness, that might sanction a usurpation, which, without being supported by reason, or any plausible motive, appears to rest on hopes of intimidating us by force.

“The American minister, whose mission was not confined to treating on the Texas question, as had been agreed with the previous Mexican government, has demanded his passports, and without a moment's hesitation, I have caused them to be inclosed to him.

“I confess, that war between two or more nations, is one of the greatest and gravest evils which can afflict them; and it has now become an instinct of civilization to avoid these disasters, and to devote itself to the advancement of industry, commerce, and those more intimate relations which arise under the auspices of a universal peace. But this must be compatible with the maintenance of the prerogatives and independence of nations, who feel themselves obliged to repel force with force, when all means of agreement and conciliation have been lost.

“The Mexican republic, despoiled of the rich, of the extensive territory of Texas, which has always belonged to it, by direct acts of the supreme authority of the neighboring republic; and the designs of the latter, of possessing itself of some of the other of our frontier departments, being apparent, it has become the duty of the Mexican nation to protest; it has protested; and I now solemnly protest, in its name, *that it does not recognize the American flag on the soil of Texas*; that it will defend its invaded property, and that it will never, never permit new conquests, new advances by the government of the United States of America.

“I have no right to declare war upon them; and the august congress of the nation, as soon as it may have assembled, will

take into consideration, whatever may pertain to the conflict in which we find ourselves engaged, and which has, in no manner, been provoked by this magnanimous and long suffering people. But in the meantime, as the United States may undertake some sudden attack against our departments—maritime, or adjacent to Texas—it will be necessary to repel force by force; and the initiative being taken by the invaders, to throw upon them the immense responsibility of having disturbed the repose of the world. I will be even more explicit, since it is of much importance that I should be so. Mexico will not commit one single aggression, as she has never committed one, against the people and government of the United States of America; but, such as may be committed against her, will be repelled to the whole extent of our power, and with all the energy of our character; because defense is nothing more than the right of preservation. A crisis having been forced upon the Mexican republic, which will subject her to many difficult tests, to great risks, and to fighting for her existence and her rights, the union of all her sons, the unanimity of her councils, and the concentration of all her efforts, are the only means which can save us—and they will save us; since Mexico will not, on this occasion, present the scandalous spectacle of intestine divisions, which would but consummate the triumph of the enemy. I do not fear it, although it is apparent to me, that all the intrigues, tricks, and artifices, which are employed with sagacity on similar occasions, have already been put in play, to deprive authority of its *prestige* and resources; and it is only when authority is upheld by the public confidence, that it can direct affairs, and lead them to a prosperous issue. \* \* \* \*

“The army will fight at those points which destiny shall indicate; and the people will sustain it in its efforts; and I pray the Sovereign Arbiter of nations that he will protect ours, and permit the elevation of its power, and the consummation of its glory.” From the above state paper, it appears, that Mexico *drew no distinction* between that portion of the soil of Texas that lies between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, and the remainder of the territory. She did not “*recognize the American flag on the soil of Texas.*” She alluded to the march of our army upon the Rio Grande, not as an invasion of her territory, for she considered the occupation



of *any part* of Texas, as an invasion, but as a menace indicating an intention, on our part, to seize *some one or more* of her other departments. Although, to a philosophical observer of events, it must have been apparent, that war between the two nations was inevitable, at no distant day, yet I have but little doubt, that if General Taylor had remained at Corpus Christi, the war might have been postponed for several years; not that his forward movement was regarded, by Mexico, as any additional cause of war, but because the two armies, having been brought into the presence of each other, first a skirmish of scouts and outposts, and then a battle were the almost necessary consequences. Notwithstanding the little importance attached by Mexico to the circumstance, however, the movement of General Taylor upon the Rio Grande, was unquestionably a false step, in the administration of Mr. Polk; but for which, we should have had Mexico at a disadvantage, on all the points of the controversy. Congress, in its joint resolution, admitted Texas with the territory "rightfully belonging" to her, and with none other; expressly reserving to the government of the United States the right to settle all disputes, in regard to boundary. Texas being an independent state *de facto* only, so far as the mother country was concerned, and being still at war with her, could "rightfully" claim no other boundary than such as she had marked out with the sword. War obliterates all boundaries, even when they have previously been fixed; and the only rule which could have been applied to Texas, was the *uti possidetis*. Texas had marauded a little in the territory lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande; but she had never exercised over it any other than a paper jurisdiction—the Mexican inhabitants remaining in the country, and the Mexican officers performing their functions. As the reader has seen, the Mexican officers at Point Isabel were in quiet possession, until they were driven away by the American troops.

The circumstance that Texas claimed to the Rio Grande, in her constitution, is unworthy of the least regard, as that claim could not alter facts; and it is by facts, that her right should be tested. Congress, in admitting her with this constitution, compromised the government in no respect whatever; both Texas and the United States being well aware, that there was a dispute with Mexico

about boundaries, and that the settlement of this dispute (involving, as a matter of course, the right to alter or modify the limits, as marked out in her constitution) had been expressly reserved to the United States. The most that can be said in favor of the march of our troops upon the Rio Grande, is, that the territory was in dispute (though evidently without any just ground of claim on the part of Texas); that the government of the United States proposed a negotiation for the settlement of this dispute, and that Mexico rejected the offer.

Having thus traced the progress of events down to within a few weeks of the commencement of hostilities, let us recapitulate briefly the points of the controversy. About the year 1825, Mexico, being desirous of populating her vacant territories, enacted sundry laws for the promotion of colonization. A number of American citizens, invited by these laws, emigrated to Texas, and became citizens of the Mexican republic. The constitution of Mexico, at the time of this emigration, was that adopted in 1824, and was in all essential respects, save in the matter of religion, almost identical with that of the United States: which was one powerful motive with the emigrants, for throwing off their old, and assuming a new citizenship. The government of the United States did not encourage, nor could it hinder, this emigration of its citizens—the right of expatriation being undeniable under our system. The colony of Texas, thus formed, remained almost unknown to our citizens, until the massacre of Fannin, which aroused the public sympathies, and directed attention to that quarter. In the meantime, in 1835, Santa Anna having overthrown the federal government, usurped the supreme power, and established a central government in its stead. Texas refused to submit to this destruction of her liberties, and declared herself independent. In 1836, she defeated the mother country in a pitched battle; and from that time, until 1844, when she was annexed to the United States, effectually maintained the independence she had declared; Mexico, in all this interval, making no serious effort to reduce her to obedience. Texas not only maintained her independence *de facto*, but was recognized as an independent nation by the principal powers of the earth. In 1844, Mexico herself consented to treat with her, on the *basis of independence*. In 1845, she was annexed

to the American Union. The government of the United States used its best exertions to preserve a strict neutrality between Texas and the mother country, until the former had established, beyond all doubt, her ability to maintain her independence.—Emigration, as before remarked, it could not prevent; but it prohibited the fitting out of armed expeditions, arrested and detained several of these, and would not permit either sailors or soldiers to be publicly recruited for the service of either belligerent. It results from the facts we have reviewed, that Texas was independent both *de jure*, as well as *de facto*, at the time of her annexation to the United States; and consequently, that she was as free to dispose of herself as Mexico, or any other sovereign power. The reader of this portion of the history of the United States, cannot but award to them the praise of having conducted themselves with sound judgment and discretion, and of having forbore toward Mexico, under her bitter taunts and jeers, until forbearance was on the point of degenerating into weakness, and a want of proper self-respect.

I have condemned the movement upon the Rio Grande, not because I believe it had any important agency in controlling events, but because it weakened, somewhat, a very strong case. The Mexican war had its origin in causes far above and beyond the petty theater of events, on which the fleeting generations of politicians play hide-and-go-seek, and then pass away and are forgotten. The passage of our race into Texas, New Mexico, and California, was but the first step in that great movement southward, which forms a part of our destiny. An all-wise Providence has placed us in juxtaposition with an inferior people, in order, without doubt, that we may sweep over them, and remove them (as a people) and their worn-out institutions from the face of the earth. We are the northern hordes of the Alani, spreading ourselves over fairer and sunnier fields, and carrying along with us, beside the newness of life, and the energy and courage of our prototypes, letters, arts, and civilization. We, of the present generation, are too near the great events that are passing around us, to judge of them correctly. We see but the dry details of our history; posterity will behold its philosophy. Like one who inspects a temple from too near a view, we see only the carving

and gilding, and suffer our attention to be distracted by the minor arrangements of pilasters and columns ; while the remote generations who are to come after us, will view the noble structure from a distance, at which all details will be lost, and which will enable them to take in at a single glance, its colossal dimensions, and the magnificent harmony of its proportions ! How insignificant, then, will appear the acts of all those who have played a part in bringing about the Mexican war ; how unimportant the sayings and doings of Mr. Tyler, or Mr. Polk ; of General Herrera, or General Paredes, and of the scores of subordinate politicians who have figured in speeches and dispatches ?

On the 24th of April, 1846, General Arista, an officer of much distinction in Mexico, arrived at Matamoras, and assumed the command of the Mexican army, amounting to about six thousand men. The force of General Taylor, as we have seen, was about four thousand, but he had authority from the government, should he deem it necessary, to call on the governors of the southern and western states, for reinforcements from the militia. General Taylor did not avail himself of this privilege, believing, in common with the government and the mass of our citizens, that notwithstanding the threats and gasconading of Mexico, no war would ensue. Indeed, the whole question of Texas was so plain a one, to every capacity, and manifestly so wholly in our favor, that it seemed little less than madness in Mexico, to undertake a war to vindicate her foolish claim to sovereignty over that territory, which had passed from her hands ten years before. There were politicians, it is true, and newspapers of respectability, which, for certain party purposes, not only predicted the event, but contributed to bring it about, by taking the Mexican side of the question, in opposition to their own government. It was even asserted by these bitter opponents of the then administration, that Mexico would have *just* cause of war ; and these assertions, finding their way, in various shapes, into Mexico, deluded the people into the belief, that the war was so unpopular in the United States, that the probable consequence of it would be a *pronunciamiento*, à la *Mexicana*, against President Polk !

In a republican country, of course, there must be parties—in deed party vigilance tends, in no small degree, to purify and keep

pure our institutions. But it is lamentable to witness what little share patriotism has in the formation of parties, in our country, and to what a slavish and corrupting system of discipline politicians are subjected. One would think, for instance, that freedom of thought, and speech, and action, were eminently the attributes of men occupying the high position of a seat in the national congress; but, unfortunately, there are but few members, who upon taking their seats in that body, do not bind themselves, hand and foot, either to the in-party, or the out-party, and think, and speak, and act, according to the Procrustean requirements of their party. A democrat no more supports a whig measure, of which his judgment approves, than does a whig, a similar democratic measure. The question of Texan annexation was treated according to these rigid party rules; and was discussed by the out-party with a view of getting in, and by the in-party with the view of staying in. Hence, it is not astonishing, that there were found some men, even in the halls of the national legislature, to declare that Mexico had just cause of war with the United States!

General Arista, as soon as he became aware of the great preponderance of his own forces over those of the American general, commenced operations. General Taylor, in the latter part of April, having dispatched Captain Thornton, of the dragoons, in command of a small squadron—about sixty—to reconnoiter the enemy, who, he had heard, had crossed over to the east bank of the river, in considerable numbers; this officer was drawn into an ambuscade, and his command was captured, by a much superior force, after an obstinate resistance, in which he lost sixteen in killed and wounded. This was the first overt act of the war; and there is reason to believe, that it was undertaken by General Arista, without proper orders from his government; as we have seen that President Paredes had formally announced his intention of standing on the defensive; that is to say, of waiting for the first blow; the march to the Rio Grande, no more than the occupation of any other part of Texas, having been deemed by him an offensive act on our part. A small affair, in which a company of Texan rangers was surprised, and three or four of them killed, occurred soon afterward. These successful skirmishes emboldening the Mexican general, he determined to cross the river,

in force, and placing himself between General Taylor and his depôt, at Point Isabel, first capture the latter—garrisoned by a small force—and then fall upon the former. General Taylor, hearing of this design, immediately marched to the relief of his depôt, which he reached without opposition. Having strengthened its defenses, and reinforced its garrison, he set out on his return for Fort Brown—his former encampment on the Rio Grande. On the 8th of May, having with him about twenty-three hundred men (his whole effective force after garrisoning his depôt and Fort Brown), he was met, on the plain of Palo Alto, by General Arista, in command of between five and six thousand men. An action immediately ensued, which lasted until nightfall, when the combatants separated; the Mexican general retiring during the night, to take up a new position in his rear; and the American general encamping on the field of battle. The Mexican loss was estimated at something like a hundred, while that on our side amounted to no more than four men killed, and three officers and thirty-six or seven men wounded. General Taylor, who had been bred an infantry officer, and who was much wedded to his own arm of the service, here had an opportunity of witnessing, for the first time, the great superiority of artillery over every other arm, in the circumstances in which he was placed. (But for the companies of light artillery which he had with him under the command of two gallant, practical artillerists, Major Ringgold and Captain Duncan, he would probably have been crushed by a single charge of the enemy.) The next day—the 9th—General Taylor continued his march; having previously thrown forward, as feelers, a body of light infantry. He soon came upon the enemy, who had taken possession of, and posted himself in and behind a *baranca*, or ravine, that ran across the road. The enemy's artillery being placed in this ravine, was partially under shelter; it opened upon our forces as they advanced, and did so much execution, that after being fired upon for awhile by our light artillery, the order was given to charge it, which was done by a body of cavalry and infantry in succession. The charge was effected with but little loss, and the enemy, being driven from his position, retired in great disorder toward the Rio Grande, to the banks of, and into which he was pursued by our people. Our loss, in both these battles,

amounted to three officers and forty men killed, and about one hundred and thirteen wounded, officers included.

Commodore Conner arrived, toward the close of these battles, with his squadron, and lent efficient aid to General Taylor, in his movement upon Matamoras, in boats and men.

These two first battles of the war, though small affairs, if we regard only the numbers that were engaged in them, were important in their results. The Mexicans, notwithstanding the lessons that had been taught them by the Texans, believed themselves our superiors in military science, in courage, in celerity of movement, and in the powers of endurance of their soldiery. The better informed among them knew, from personal observation, that we were far more numerous as a people; that we had outstripped them in the race of commerce, and in the pursuit of the mechanic arts; but even these were inclined to regard us, as Napoleon was wont to regard our great ancestor, as a "nation of shopkeepers," and to consider us as "foemen, unworthy of their steel." The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma caused the scales to fall from their eyes, and not only awakened them to a true appreciation of our character, but even magnified our prowess. Such was the demoralizing effects of these two encounters, on our enemy, that I think I do not affirm too much when I say, that the specters here conjured up hovered over all the subsequent battle-fields of Mexico, and acted as a powerful moral reinforcement of our arms. General Arista and his subordinate officers crossed the Rio Grande, buoyant with hope, self-assured, and self-satisfied; not doubting but they should execute their well known boast of driving us beyond the Sabine; but they returned to Matamoras, crest-fallen and disappointed men, from whose mouths, rumor, with her thousand tongues, flew over the country in every direction, spreading terror and dismay. The "rich and extensive" territory of Texas, which Mexico, up to this period, had persisted in claiming as her "department," was freed forever from the tread of her hostile foot; and the banner of the "Alani" was planted, in conquest, on the banks of the famed Rio Grande: half a century hence, it will probably wave on the crests of the Sierra Madre.

Another result, but of less note, of these battles was, that they subsequently made the commanding generals, on both sides, presi-

dents of their respective republics ; the American general being carried in triumph to the executive chair, as a conqueror; and the Mexican, as no less a hero, for having been *less* beaten than any of his *confrères*, who subsequently commanded the Mexican armies. How truly does mankind remain the same in all ages, notwithstanding our boast of progress and civilization ! We are the same semi-civilized barbarians that the Romans were, more than two thousand years ago, when the victorious general returned from his battle-fields, but to be invested with the consular robes, and installed in the chair of Romulus. The same love of military glory takes captive all imaginations, in our day, as then, and leads to the same apotheosis. I would not be understood as desiring to detract, in the least degree, from the merits of General Taylor. He was an honest, upright, patriotic and modest soldier, who was made president almost in spite of himself. It is the political wire-workers, who do all this kind of mischief, in our country. When a presidential contest approaches, these patriotic gentlemen look, not for the most fit, but for the most *available* candidate, precisely as the merchant selects the most saleable piece of goods for the market. The love of military exploits is a feeling which does great credit to the mass of our population, since it is but a reflex of patriotism. The inhabitants of the country participate in this feeling, more than the inhabitants of the towns. In their more abundant leisure, they read the dispatches of their generals, and ponder over the descriptions of battles. Courage is a virtue which has been, and will continue to be, honored in all ages ; and when we read of the courageous exploits of our brethren, our self-love whispers adroitly in our ear, that if the exploits are not our own, they are at least, such as we should perform, in similar circumstances. Our vanity is gratified ; and as all wars, whether right or wrong, have the welfare, real or fancied, of our country for their object, our patriotism is also gratified. The politician—that hungry out-man in search of a place—understanding well how these feelings influence masses, is ever ready to ride into office upon the back of a military man, if such a one, at all *available*, can be found.

The tactics, on these occasions, are various, being confined to no particular party. In 1828, General Jackson became the first mili-



tary president, in this country, since Washington. The democrats ran him in, mainly by the use of hickory brooms, and hickory poles.

"Freemen, cheer the hickory tree!  
In storms, its boughs have sheltered thee;  
O'er freedom's land its banners wave,  
'Twas planted on the lion's grave!"

The democrats held the government, and the "spoils," a long time; until the whigs stole their thunder from them (after having bestowed all kinds of abuse upon it), and brought forward General Harrison, as the hard-cider and coon-candidate. They mainly sang this worthy old gentleman into office:

"It's Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"

aided by processions of log-cabins and live coons. Lastly came General Taylor, "Old Rough and Ready," who was brought into power by the combined tactics of the politicians of both parties—a sort of compromise being made, by which each party hoped to get a share of the "treasury pap."

Seriously, it is to be regretted that there should be this propensity in our country, in the nineteenth century, to give so great a preponderance to military men, over statesmen, in civil affairs. If ours were a central, consolidated government, much given to war and conquests, I should entertain serious apprehension of the loss of our liberties from this cause, at some future day; but fortunately, we live under a planetary system, which, if it be preserved in its purity, will enable the states to revolve, safely, in their orbits, without being scorched by the sun of military glory.

The news of the capture of Captain Thornton's party, and of the battles of the 8th and 9th of May, reached New Orleans nearly at the same time, and thence spread rapidly over the country, taking everybody by surprise, and creating great excitement. A generation had passed away, since the United States had been involved in a foreign war, and the descriptions of marches and battles were as novel, as captivating to the mass of readers. Bonfires and illuminations testified everywhere the public satisfaction; and the congress of the nation, then in session, forgetting for a moment, their party tactics, voted, with unexampled unanimity, an ample supply of men and money, and affirmed the declaration of

the president, in his message, communicating the intelligence of the existence of hostilities, to the effect, that "war existed by the act of Mexico." I shall not follow General Taylor across the Rio Grande, nor accompany him in his march, in the following September, to Monterey; which city he captured after three days' hard fighting; nor describe his crowning triumph at Buena Vista, on the 23d February, 1846; as this would require me to write the history of the Mexican war; which is not the design of these pages. I must beg the reader to accompany me to other climes, and direct his attention to other scenes,

"All which I saw, and part of which I was."

Soon after the evacuation of the Brazos by the Mexicans, as described a few pages back, the brig of war to which I was attached, was withdrawn temporarily from the Gulf of Mexico, and dispatched on a cruise of five or six weeks, near the island of St. Domingo, in the West Indies. At the time of our departure from Point Isabel, we partook of the incredulity of our brethren of the army, in regard to the probability of a war with Mexico. We were equally surprised, therefore, with our fellow-citizens at home, to receive, at the hospitable house of Mr. Harrison, of Puerto Plata (a town of the White republic, on the north side of St. Domingo, in the harbor of which our brig was lying), a file of American newspapers, giving us detailed accounts of the first brilliant victories. We felt the more proud of our brethren of the army, from the circumstance of having received the intelligence of their exploits in a foreign land; and although our cruise, thus far, had been a very pleasant one, and had other objects of novelty and interest in store for us, we became anxious to return to the theater of operations. Our instructions still required us to touch at the ports of Cape Haytien, and Port au Prince, in the Black republic, and remain a few days in each. We took the earliest opportunity of leaving Puerto Plata, in which we had spent many agreeable days in the society of our countrymen, and the foreigners domiciled there; and running down the coast, with a favorable trade-wind, executed our orders, and returned to Pensacola about the 1st of July. Here we were detained some eight or ten days, replenishing our water and provisions; at the end of which time, we again got underway, and hastened with all the speed of a dull

vessel, to rejoin the squadron off Vera Cruz. The squadron at this time consisted of the following vessels, viz :

The frigate Cumberland (flag-ship),		Captain Forrest,	of 50 guns.
"	"	Raritan,	" Gregory 50 "
"	"	Potomac,	" Aulick, 50 "
1st class steamer	Mississippi,	"	Fitzhugh, 8 "
2d "	"	Princeton,	Commander Engle, 10 "
Sloop of war,	St. Mary's,	"	Saunders, 24 "
"	"	Falmouth,	" Jarvis, 24 "
"	"	John Adams,	" McCluney, 24 "
Brig,	Somers,	"	Ingraham, 10 "
"	Lawrence	"	Mercer, 10 "
"	Truxton,	"	Carpender, 10 "
"	Porpoise,	Lieutenant Hunt,	10 "
Schooner	Flirt,	"	Sinclair, 10 "

Upon the breaking out of the war, Commodore Conner, under instructions from the government, immediately declared all the ports of Mexico, on the Gulf, in a state of blockade. It was not meant by this declaration, to establish a paper blockade, such as we had so often protested against, when a neutral. On the contrary, although the declaration was general, no attempt was made to enforce it, except as to such ports as were actually invested by a sufficient blockading force. As a commercial nation, interested in the freedom of the seas, it behooved us, to set an example of liberality in this war, to the other commercial powers of the world, and to show them that the principles we had so long contended for, in vain when a neutral, we were willing to carry out in good faith, now that we had become a belligerent. It was accordingly ordered by Mr. Mason, the then secretary of the navy, not only that blockades should be *de facto*, but that the whole doctrine of "constructive notice of the existence of a blockade," should be exploded, and that a special warning before the blockaded ports should be given in all cases previous to capture. Our favorite principle that "free ships make free goods" was also proclaimed, and uniformly acted upon throughout the war. Commodore Conner, and after him, Commodore Perry, carried out these instructions with much judgment and discretion, and in entire accordance with the spirit in which they had been conceived by the government.

Soon after joining the squadron, I became Commodore Conner's flag-lieutenant and boarding officer, and had frequent occasion to admire his thorough acquaintance with the law of prize, and his discrimination and tact, in disposing of cases presented for his decision. Although we made many captures during the war, there did not occur a single case, in which he was not sustained by the admiralty courts of the country. Some few complaints were made by one of the foreign ministers at Washington, of undue rigor, and partiality; but they were based upon false and garbled statements, presented by masters of vessels and other interested persons, and were always dismissed, upon investigation, as unworthy of further notice.

In the interval, between the declaration of these blockades and the siege and capture of Vera Cruz, no duties could have been more irksome than those which devolved upon the navy. During the whole of this period, we were confined to our ships, and engaged in the most arduous and active cruising. A rigid blockade was maintained of all the enemy's ports, and his small merchant marine was entirely swept from the sea. During the parching heats of summer, and the long and boisterous nights of winter, our vigilance was expected to be, and was, unremitting. We frequently lived on the ship's ration, having no other means of supplying our table, and our only clean shirts were such as Jack rinsed out for us in a bucket of salt water, and hung up by a rope-yarn to rough-dry, in the rigging. We of the flag-ship, lay most of the time at Anton Lizardo—a harbor formed by several small barren islands, rising no more than a foot or two above the sea-level,—which was even more irksome than active service on the blockade. We looked forth from our ship, as from a prison, upon the glittering specks of sand, glowing like so many furnaces, beneath a tropical sun, day after day, without other variation than the occasional arrival of one of the blockading squadron, to fill up with water and provisions, and depart again on her cruise. Thither we resorted toward sunset every evening, when the weather was propitious, to stretch our cramped limbs, smoke an idle cigar, and talk over the events of the war; a war, for the navy, of toils and vigils, without the prospect of either excitement or glory. The enemy had no navy, and what little maritime commerce he had once possessed,

we had already, as I have said, destroyed. Our force was too weak to undertake the attack of Vera Cruz; nor was it likely that the government would reinforce it sufficiently, to enable us to do so. It was evidently its policy—indeed the only policy—to carry on the war wholly on land, leaving the navy to act the subordinate, but not less onerous part of harassing and annoying the enemy on his sea-board, cutting off his supplies of provisions and munitions of war, and of aiding our land forces, in the duties of transport, convoy, making descents, etc. Although we of the naval service ardently desired it, it would have been a great piece of folly in the government to have assaulted Vera Cruz, and its castle, by sea. It would have been attended with great destruction of property—perhaps the sinking of some half-a-dozen ships—and with corresponding loss of life. Two contingencies, which, in the present century, when war is reduced almost to the perfection of an exact science, it became the duty of the government to guard against. Men and ships are of no moment whatever, if their sacrifice be necessary to the success of an important enterprise; but in this instance, our government had the entire game in its own hands, and such a sacrifice would not only have been impolitic, but discreditable. Designing, as it did, to make Vera Cruz the base of operations against the center of Mexico, it was of no importance to us to possess this place, until the army of invasion should be prepared for its descent; and then a few days of siege would effect our purpose, almost without loss—as events verified. These were the views of Commodore Conner, and of several other distinguished naval officers who were consulted on the subject by the navy department; and it redounds much to the credit of them all, that in opposition to their personal interests, as military men, they gave such sound and patriotic advice to the government. We juniors chafed somewhat under the curb which was thus placed on our ambition of emulating the army, in its glorious achievements; but now that the excitement of the war has passed, we cannot but recognize the wisdom of the course of our superiors. But all the acts of mankind are not guided by wisdom. While the people illuminated their cities, and lighted bonfires in the country, in celebration of the victories of the army, the toils and hardships of the navy were not only forgotten, but this branch of

the service was loaded with obloquy for not performing impossibilities. With the exception of Vera Cruz, there was no town on the whole Gulf coast of Mexico, within effective cannon range of which, a sloop-of-war could approach. The maritime towns of the enemy were more effectually defended by reefs, sand-bars, and shallows, than were his inland towns by redoubts and intrenchments. Notwithstanding these natural obstacles, our belligerent fellow-citizens, many of whom supposed a ship to be little other than a high-pressure western steamboat, expected us to lay waste the whole of the enemy's coast, by fire and sword. Even some of the respectable papers in the cities, which ought to have been capable of appreciating the true state of things, manifested impatience at what they called our inactivity, and were disposed to pass censure upon us. The younger and more sensitive of the officers were so much annoyed by these newspaper squibs, that I believe an expedition to storm "old Nick" himself, could have been gotten up, at any time, without difficulty. But the navy, none the less, continued to perform its arduous and thankless duties. Drenched with rain by day and night, and a part of the time, on an allowance of moldy and worm-eaten bread, the officers and seamen of the several blockading ships, never lost sight (except when occasionally driven off by a norther) of the enemy's coast. Although Vera Cruz, by reason of the dangerous ground in its vicinity, is one of the hardest ports in the world to blockade, especially during the violent gales of winter, I venture to say that the history of no other blockade, presents so few instances of the successful attempts of cupidity, to evade the vigilance of cruisers. Although Anton Lizardo, where we lay at anchor in the flag-ship, was some twelve miles distant from Vera Cruz, the officer of the morning watch—frequently after a tempestuous night—was sure to see, by the aid of his spy-glass, at early dawn, the blockading-ship standing in, under easy and majestic sail, for the frowning old castle of *San Juan de Ulloa*. These duties were so well performed by all the ships of the squadron, that it might seem invidious to particularize; yet I cannot forego the pleasure of recording the tribute of my admiration, and that of other officers, to the masterly and professional manner, in which the beautiful ship *St. Mary's*, Commander Saunders, was uniformly handled. She performed more block-

ading service than any other vessel on the station, and in fair weather and in foul, amid reefs and shallows, she was always found in her place ; an eye-sore to the Vera Cruzanos, and a terror to all adventurous masters of merchant ships, who came with hopes of running the blockade. The steamer Princeton, Commander Engle, was also a most active and efficient cruiser, but she had the advantage of the St. Mary's in being propelled, in part, by steam.

During the two years that the war lasted, many changes of officers took place. The wearing and harassing nature of our service, in a pestilential climate, had a powerful effect upon the constitutions of officers and men. But as the old officers broke down, new ones would arrive, and a rendezvous, which was kept open at New Orleans, supplied recruits to take the places of such seamen as were transferred, from time to time, to the hospital at Pensacola. Commodore Conner and Commodore Perry, each returned successively from his command, with broken health and impaired constitutions. But war will have its victims; and in our war with Mexico, many more men were sacrificed by disease, brought on by exposure to the hardships and privations incident to it, by sea and land, than were killed on the field of battle.— These holocausts of the navy, to the grim-visaged demon, fell one by one, silently and unnoticed, and were carried to their lonely and romantic resting-places by the sea-shore, untrumpeted of fame. Their requiem was sung, not by the booming of cannon on the battle-field, but by the solemn-sounding surge, and the moaning of the norther, as it charitably heaped up fresh piles of sand on their newly-made graves.

## CHAPTER V.

Mexico attempts to organize a system of privateering, but does not succeed—Loss of the United States brig *Truxton*, and the gallant escape of Lieutenants Hunter and Berryman—Arrival of Commodore Perry in the steamer *Vixen*—Occupation of Laguna, in the peninsula of Yucatan—Governor Bigelow and his levees—Address of the inhabitants to Commodore Perry—Attack of Alvarado—Fails of success by an unfortunate accident—Commodore Perry sails for Tobasco—Captures the town, and makes prizes of several vessels—Author ordered to command the brig *Somers*—Burning of the Mexican brig *Crenle*—Reconnaissance of Passed Assistant Surgeon Wright, and Passed Midshipman Rogers—Capture of the latter—Loss of the United States brig *Somers*.

At one time there was much excitement in the squadron on the subject of privateering. General Salas, who succeeded Paredes in the presidency, and who in the course of the war made himself famous, by proclaiming "no quarter to the Yankees," made strenuous efforts to get afloat a number of privateers, which should prey upon our commerce. If Mexico had been a maritime people, this would have been her true policy. A few fast-sailing vessels, distributed in the different seas, and officered and manned by bold fellows in the pursuit of plunder, might have inflicted incalculable injury upon us. This system of predatory warfare, more than any other, equalizes the strength of nations on the water.—Fleets and heavy-armed ships are of no avail against the lighter heels and more erratic wanderings of this description of force. But Mexico had no materials whereon to operate. To render privateering available to her, under the laws of nations, it was necessary that at least a majority of the officers and crew of each cruiser should be *citizens*; not citizens made *ad hoc*, in fraud of the law, but *bona fide* citizens; and any vessel which might have attempted to cruise under a letter of marque and reprisal, without this essential requisite, would have become, from that moment, a *pirate*. As Mexico had never possessed any marine, military or



commercial, worth the name, and as what little she had, at the commencement of the war, had been taken from her by our cruisers, she found it impossible to fulfill this condition, except to a very limited extent. President Salas, in order to overcome the difficulty, endeavored, contrary to the good faith which should exist among nations, even when at war, and in violation of the plainest principles of common sense, to manufacture citizens for the occasion. For this purpose he issued blank certificates of naturalization to the Mexican consuls at Havana and other places, with directions to those officers to fill them up with the names of any adventurers that might offer, irrespective of those great principles so well understood, and practiced upon, by all civilized nations, in a procedure of such moment. Without the observance of these principles, no man can transfer his allegiance to another country, and claim the protection due to citizenship under its laws. A sort of *jus gentium* has grown up on the subject, which individual nations are no longer at liberty to disregard; and much less have they the right to disregard it, in fraud of belligerent rights, as Mexico attempted to do in the present instance. It would be a monstrous doctrine indeed, if on the eve of a war, or at any time during its existence, either of the belligerents might invite the citizens of other nations, *ad libitum*, to take part in his quarrel, and with a single stroke of his pen make them citizens *pro hac vice*.

The requisites of citizenship, and in regard to which Mexico and the United States both agree, are: 1st, residence; 2dly, a previous declaration of intention; 3dly, a renunciation of foreign allegiance; and 4thly, the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign, properly taken before a judicial officer. The whole transaction must be *bona fide*, from beginning to end; and there must be no fraudulent intent, either on the part of the government or individuals. Great Britain waves residence, in the case of seamen serving in her national marine; or rather, she regards her ships of war as portions of her territory; and a constructive residence follows as a necessary result of the principle. Mexico, in imitation of Great Britain, has adopted and even extended this principle; since she puts her merchant service *quoad hoc*, on a footing with her national marine. Any sailors or marines, who were actually

in the service of Mexico, at the time of issuing the blank certificates, by President Salas, might undoubtedly have been made good citizens; but it is equally clear that, beyond this limitation, every foreigner who might have undertaken to prey upon our commerce, would have been deemed to be, and would have been treated as, a pirate. This unworthy attempt of Mexico to strike a blow at us on the ocean, by means of so great a fraud, was met by the commercial nations of the world with the contempt it deserved, and produced no results; and it was fortunate for humanity that it was so, as our government was prepared to adopt the view of the subject which I have here presented, and to carry it out with sternness. Indeed, there is a growing disposition among civilized nations, to put an end to this disreputable mode of warfare, under any circumstances. It had its origin in remote and comparatively barbarous ages, and has for its object rather the plunder of the bandit, than honorable warfare. The cruisers being private vessels, fitted out on speculation, and officered and manned, generally, by unscrupulous and unprincipled men, it is impossible for the government which commissions them, to have them under proper control. Bonds and penalties, forfeiture of vessel, etc., are entirely powerless, to restrain the passions of cupidity and revenge, when once fairly aroused. From the nature of the materials of which the crews of these vessels are composed—the adventurous and desperate of all nations—the shortness of their cruises, and the demoralizing pursuit in which they are engaged, it is next to impossible that any discipline can be established or maintained among them. In short, they are little better than licensed pirates; and it behooves all civilized nations, and especially nations who, like ourselves, are extensively engaged in foreign commerce, to suppress the practice altogether.

In August 1846, the brig of war Truxton, of twelve guns, Commander Carpenter, was lost on the reef of Tuspan, a port to the northward and westward of Vera Cruz. Commander Carpenter, having been sent to cruise on this part of the coast, and being anxious to reconnoiter it as closely as possible, and to communicate with the town, ran his vessel in, a little too boldly, and grounded her on the bar, on which there is always a heavy swell. She soon bilged and sunk. The officers and crew were saved with-

out loss of life, and having no means of reaching the squadron, or otherwise saving themselves, from so unpleasant a fate, they were obliged to surrender themselves prisoners of war to the authorities. Lieutenants Hunter and Berryman, to whom the option was given by their commander, performed, with three or four seamen, the bold and successful feat of escaping imprisonment, in one of the brig's small boats. They fearlessly committed themselves, in this tiny bark, to the open and boisterous sea; and finding themselves possessed of an independent command, captured, on the second day out, one of the enemy's small coasters, in which they arrived safely, a few days afterward, at Anton Lizardo.

Commodore Perry joined us about this time, in the small steamer *Vixen*, Commander Sands. He came out with orders to report himself as "second in command" of the squadron, with the rank of commodore; which title he had previously earned by commanding a squadron on the coast of Africa; where he rendered good service to the government and manifested much energy and decision, in the destruction of several piratical towns along the coast. The *Vixen* was an important acquisition to the squadron, as previous to her arrival we had sadly felt the want of small vessels, and particularly of steamers. A predatory warfare along the coast, was all that we could hope to carry on; and for this purpose our heavier vessels were entirely useless.

A short time after his arrival, Commodore Perry was dispatched by the commander-in-chief, with a sufficient force, to take possession of the town of Laguna del Carmen, in the peninsula of Yucatan. This state, for the last ten years, had been more or less rebellious against the Mexican government. She had sympathized with Texas and Zacatecas, in their resentment of the destruction of the federal constitution, by Santa Anna, in 1835, and had subsequently arrayed herself in armed opposition—in alliance with Texas—to the central government. In 1843, or 1844, she became reconciled to the central authorities; and since that period she has been alternately an independent state, and a department of Mexico, several times, according as the one party or the other has gotten the upper hand. A short time previous to the breaking out of the war with the United States, she had resumed her allegiance to the Mexican government, and from having

been a treacherous friend, had become an avowed enemy of Texas. But discretion being more profitable than valor, she again, upon the declaration of the blockade, and with the hope of relieving herself from its operation, and from the other inconveniences of the war, resumed her independent flag, and dispatched, at the same moment, a minister to Washington to negotiate her recognition, and a commissioner to Commodore Conner, imploring his forbearance. Our government, upon a hearing of all the facts of the case, as presented by Commodore Conner, and the Yucatan minister, adopted a middle course, in the premises, and resolved to regard her neither as a friend nor an enemy. As a friend she was to be suspected, inasmuch as she had come to us in this guise, at a late hour, and under strong motives of self-interest; and as an enemy, she could do us no harm; and therefore it would have been unnecessary, as well as cruel, to visit upon her the rigors of war. It was in accordance with this determination of the government, that Commodore Perry was dispatched to take possession of the principal port in the peninsula. Taking with him the *Vixen*, and one or two of the three gun-boat schooners (which had also joined us by this time), he entered the harbor without opposition, and took formal possession of the town, and one or two small forts. A military and civil governor was appointed (Commander Sands being made the first governor), and the revenues were collected in the name of the United States. A cordon of boats was then established in the bay, and up the principal river, as far as *Palisada*, to cut off all communication between the eastern part of the peninsula, and the department of Tobasco; and thus prevent the enemy from supplying himself with arms and other munitions of war, through Campeachy, Sisal, and the adjoining province of British Honduras. While strict orders were given, on the one hand, to protect the inhabitants in their persons and property, and while they were permitted to indulge in a qualified external commerce, every care was taken, on the other, to prevent them from holding any intercourse with the enemy. This being the first maritime town captured on the gulf, its possession was of considerable importance to us, as it enabled us to draw hence, for the use of the squadron, beef-cattle, fruits, vegetables, and other anti-scorbutics, of which we had long felt the want.—

Everything was paid for at its full value, and Laguna, in a short time, became more flourishing, under our rule, than it had ever been before. The several governors, who relieved each other in command, and their subordinates, performed their duties with so much judgment and tact, that, at the conclusion of the war, the inhabitants were loth to have us depart. Governor Bigelow (a commander in the navy), who governed it longest, and remained in power until the close of the war, became so popular, that I believe he might have gotten up a *pronunciamiento* on his account, and have set up an independent state for himself! Being a gallant gentleman, in every sense of the word, he had become as popular with the women, as with the men, through the medium of sundry balls and parties; which were gotten up in fine taste, and always crushingly attended. The house of Mr. Johnson (the English consul, and an accomplished and elegant gentleman, though, from having been born in the West Indies, a little tainted with African blood) was hospitably thrown open to us; and, in short, so many were the attractions of this neutral port, clean shirts included, that it became a sort of privilege for us rough blockaders to be stationed there.

I recollect, on my first visit, being highly amused at the distinctions the simple natives drew at the door of the theater, to regulate the price of admission. The population was divided into two parts, the aristocrats and the plebeians; the former included those who wore shoes, and the latter those who went barefoot. An aristocrat's ticket (it matters not whether he were with or without stockings, as in the case of a lady this might have been a delicate point to inquire into), was two reals (twenty-five cents), while that of a plebeian was only half the sum.

At the expense of a slight anachronism, and that I may take leave of Yucatan, I quote below extracts from a memorial addressed, by the inhabitants of Laguna, to Commodore Perry, who had become commander-in-chief of the squadron, upon the retirement of Commodore Conner, requesting him, notwithstanding the ratification of the treaty of peace between the United States and Mexico, not to withdraw his forces, until Mexico should be in a condition to protect them:

"MOST EXCELLENT SIR:—

"The undersigned, inhabitants of the village of Carmen, who have assembled, under the presidency of Don José Robira, to take into consideration their present political condition, in the extraordinary circumstances in which they are placed, have resolved to submit respectfully to the consideration of your excellency, the reasons which have influenced them, in requesting your excellency, as they now do, that you will be pleased to order the forces under your command not to abandon this island, until the supreme government of Mexico shall be in a condition to attend to its security and defense; to which end they have resolved to send a copy of this manifesto, through commissioners appointed for the purpose, to the city of Mexico; said commissioners being further charged to explain to the supreme government, the rectitude of their intentions, in asking you for protection, in their forlorn condition. The undersigned have, for a long time, foreseen the afflicting circumstances in which this island would be placed, if, in consequence of a peace between Mexico and the United States, the forces of the latter should be withdrawn; thus abandoning them at a moment, when it would be impossible for them to preserve public order, in consequence of the exterminating war—[a war of the Indians against the whites, which had broken out, a short time before]—waged upon them; and consequently as early as the month of March last, they entreated you, notwithstanding a peace might be made, not to evacuate this island immediately.

"Now that the war of the barbarians has made such progress, and that, in consequence of it, there is a daily immigration into this island of large numbers of persons, who bring with them nothing but indigence and hunger, and that by the treaty of peace, the time draws near when the only guarantees of tranquillity and order we have, are to be withdrawn, the undersigned can do no less than renew their petition to you, with increased earnestness. \* \* \* \* Yucatan, being entirely unable to aid her population, is obliged to demand, in the name of humanity and civilization, protection from some power which may be willing to afford it to her. \* \* \* \* In view of the straitened circum-

stances in which this population is placed, Mexico could not consider the temporary occupation, solicited of you by the undersigned, under any other aspect than that of *necessity*, and of the right of self-preservation, on our part; and on your part, as an act of philanthropy and humanity, and not as a violation of the treaty. \*

\* \* The undersigned address themselves to you with the greater confidence, inasmuch as they have witnessed your earnest desire for the prosperity of this people, as manifested in the appointment of the worthy governors you have been pleased to send us, and in the improvements you have undertaken for the public convenience, and ornament—which generous and enlightened acts will long cause your excellency to be gratefully remembered, in this community. \* \* \* \* For these strong and powerful considerations, the undersigned supplicate you most earnestly, that you will continue in the military occupation of this island, until Mexico shall send sufficient forces to occupy and defend it.”

The history of few military occupations in any country presents us with such a picture as this; and I take pleasure in recording it, as it is highly creditable, not only to Commodore Conner, under whom the occupation was commenced, and to Commodore Perry, under whom it was continued, but to all the subordinate officers who administered the affairs of the island. The inhabitants, instead of being trodden down under the iron heel of despotism, and loaded with all kinds of imposition, as they would have been, had a European power occupied the island, were treated kindly and humanely, and so far conciliated, that I have not a doubt, that if the United States had entertained the desire to annex the whole peninsula of Yucatan to our confederacy, there would scarcely have been a dissenting voice, among the inhabitants. Our institutions found worthy representatives in our naval officers; and they became as popular in Yucatan, after an administration of eighteen months, as our people are destined in time to become, over the whole American continent.

Commodore Perry having executed the orders of the commander-in-chief, and having made all necessary arrangements for the government of the island, returned to the squadron in the steamer *Mississippi*; leaving behind him the steamer *Vixen*, and

gun-schooner Petrel—Lieutenant Shaw of the latter being installed as vice-governor, and collector of the customs.

On the 16th October, 1846, Commodore Conner, in the steamer Vixen, with the steamer McLane and five other small vessels, assisted by Commodore Perry in the steamer Mississippi, made a demonstration against Alvarado, a small port about thirty miles south-east of Vera Cruz; which failed of success by an unlucky accident. Getting under-way before daylight—the flotilla, in tow of the steamer Mississippi—we were off Alvarado at an early hour, but were unable to cross the bar, in consequence of a calm. The current from the river is so rapid, that it was necessary to have the assistance of the sea-breeze to enable the two small steamers to tow in the gun-boats. The town of Alvarado is situated about two miles up the river of the same name. The latter is a narrow and rapid stream, and without bend or curve from its mouth to the town. The defenses were formidable. At the mouth of the river, on the left bank, there was a water battery of eight guns, commanding the approach to the bar. Between this and the town, there was another battery on the same bank, but smaller. In the town itself there was still another. In addition to these batteries there were several hulks of vessels moored across the river, in a position to command the approach to the town, by a raking fire. The plan of attack was as follows: The flotilla was to approach, in two lines ahead—one in tow of the Vixen, and the other in tow of the McLane; the boats of the squadron, of which there were several present, were to pull in also in line ahead, between the two divisions of the flotilla. The steamer Mississippi was to take up her station outside the bar, as near as she could approach with safety, and bombard the town, while the attack was being made by the flotilla.

Before the setting in of the sea-breeze, the bar was sounded, and the mouth of the river closely reconnoitered under the enemy's fire, by Passed Midshipman Henry Rodgers.

At about one o'clock, P. M., the Mississippi having previously taken her station, and commenced to shell the town, the sea-breeze began to make its tardy appearance. The two lines being now formed, and the boats in readiness, Commodore Conner, in the Vixen, led the way, and upon crossing the bar, was received



sharply by the eight-gun battery. The Vixen sped gallantly on, however, receiving an occasional shot in her hull, and having some of her light work overhead shattered, until the mouth of the river was nearly gained, when, to the astonishment and mortification of the commodore, the McLane, having in tow three of his five gun-boats, grounded on the bar, and threw everything into confusion. There was no alternative. It would have been madness to proceed to the assault of a place so well defended, with but three small vessels, mounting in all but *five guns*; and the commodore, with that coolness and soundness of judgment which characterized him, drew off his forces in good order (it being near sunset when the McLane was released from her perilous position), and returned to his anchorage.

Two or three days after this affair, Commodore Perry was dispatched, with pretty much the same force, to make an assault on Tobasco, situated some sixty miles up the river of the same name. He entered the river without opposition, with such of his small vessels as could cross the bar; but was received, as he approached the town, with a sharp fire of artillery and small arms. Springing the broadsides of his vessels—one of which was armed with forty-two pound carronades—upon his enemy, he opened a deadly and destructive fire, in return, within pistol shot, and under cover of his artillery, landed a party of marines and sailors, which took possession of the plaza, and several other parts of the town. Having driven General Bruno from his defenses (who, nevertheless, obstinately refused to surrender the town), Commodore Perry, at the earnest solicitation of the citizens—many of them were foreign merchants—ceased his fire, and drew on board the party he had landed. As the only object of this attack was to carry the place by a *coup de main*, and seize the shipping in the port, which latter had been done, there was no further motive for firing upon the town; humanity and policy both requiring that there should be no unnecessary destruction of private property. It having been no part of the design of the commander-in-chief, to hold a place so remote from the sea-board—he having no proper force under his control, with which to garrison it, without unduly weakening his squadron—Commodore Perry, as soon as he collected and secured his prizes, of which he had made quite a

number, returned to the anchorage at Anton Lizardo, after an absence of something less than a week.

In this action we had three men killed and several wounded. Among the former, the whole squadron mourned Lieutenant C. W. Morris, of the flag-ship; a gallant and accomplished officer, and son of Commodore Charles Morris, one of the surviving heroes of the Tripolitan war, who was with Decatur in the romantic and desperate enterprise of burning the frigate Philadelphia. Lieutenant Morris was not killed instantly, but died soon after reaching the squadron, in the perfect possession of his senses to the last, and with the heroism and fortitude of a Christian. He was buried with the honors befitting his rank, and the sympathy of every officer and man in the squadron accompanied him to the grave; *requiescat in pace*.

These expeditions served to break in agreeably upon the monotony of the blockade, and to give us something to talk about. The war, by this means, became more endurable; though we still pined for something to do, that should give us more *éclat*, and better satisfy our countrymen at home. It became a common saying with us, that the navy stood in need of a big "butcher's bill," and that Brother Jonathan would be satisfied with nothing less.

During the absence of Commodore Perry at Tobasco, I was detached from the flag-ship, and ordered to the command of the brig Somers, in place of Commander Ingraham, who had worn himself out by incessant toil on the blockade, and was obliged, reluctantly, to return home. The Somers being a fast and active vessel, was a very efficient blockader; and she was consequently continued on this service, before Vera Cruz, sometimes assisted by other vessels, but for the most part, alone. As the season of northers had now arrived, it was our practice to get under-way every morning at daylight, stand "off and on," in front of the city during the day, and toward sunset, run in to our anchorage again, under Green Island (*Isla Verde*). By this means, we were always at our post, ready to intercept anything that might appear off the harbor, without running the risk of being blown off by the northers, and leaving the city exposed while we were regaining our station.

In November, Commodore Conner, leaving us alone on this duty, repaired with the rest of the squadron to Tampico; which port he captured without resistance. Having no force wherewith to garrison this place, he dispatched Commodore Perry, in the steamer *Mississippi*, to New Orleans, to procure one. This active officer returned in six or eight days, with the necessary troops, and Tampico was put on a footing with other captured places; a civil and military governor (officer of the army), being appointed, and the revenues collected in the name of the United States. Commodore Conner remained some days longer, to concert measures of administration, police, etc., with the military commandant; but Commodore Perry, with most of the squadron, returned to our permanent head-quarters, at Anton Lisardo.

It was during the absence of this expedition, that Lieutenant Parker, accompanied by Passed Midshipmen Rodgers and Hynson, with five seamen, performed the clever exploit of burning the Mexican merchant brig *Creole*, under the walls of *San Juan de Ulloa*. They pulled in, under cover of night, and boarding the vessel without opposition, fired her in several places, and departed unmolested; although within pistol range of the castle! Some little noise having been made on board the brig, when they were in the act of boarding, they were hailed by one of the sentinels; but Lieutenant Parker speaking the language like a native, gave some satisfactory reply, and they were not farther noticed.

A few days after this, the acting surgeon, Dr. Wright, and Passed Midshipman R. C. Rogers, who had been in the habit of visiting, occasionally, of an evening after we had anchored, the English ships-of-war lying at Sacrificios, and picking up, through the officers, much information in regard to the topography of the coast—on which the Englishmen were in the daily habit of hunting—the force of the enemy, etc.; came to me and reported that a certain building which we had often noticed from our anchorage, situated on a prominent sand-ridge about a mile and a half from the town, was occupied by the enemy as a magazine for powder; that they had understood that the guard was very small; and that it would be an easy matter to surprise it, and blow it up; the only difficulty being with regard to the approach to it from the beach. To all appearance, as viewed by our glasses, it was situated in the midst

of a dense *clappara* (a thicket of thorn and prickly pear, impenetrable to man or beast), with no outlet in our direction. Preparatory to any attempt against it, therefore, it was all important that the pathway to it should be found, and explored, in order that the storming party might execute their movement with celerity and precision, and before any alarm could be given, and succor arrive from the city. The two gentlemen above mentioned volunteered to make a night reconnoissance to this end; and I supplied them with a boat, and a boat's crew, for the purpose. The moon was near her full, and the nights serene and cloudless. Toward eleven or twelve o'clock, they pulled in, with muffled oars, to the beach, and spent several hours wandering about among the sand-hills, wading through shallow lagoons, etc., but without success; when, being exhausted with fatigue, they returned on board. This they repeated the second night, making more progress than before, and winding their way to within a short distance of the magazine. Still they had not found the desired clew to this labyrinth; and it was necessary to make another visit. In the meantime, their movements had not been so entirely unobserved, as they had supposed. They had been seen pulling in, thus mysteriously, and at so late an hour of the night, by some wayfarer, who gave notice of the circumstance to the authorities of the town. The commandant of the cavalry-coast-guard accordingly dispatched a troop of light horse to keep a watch for them. Having pulled in on the third night, as usual, and moored their boat a short distance from the beach, as a protection to the seamen who were to remain by her, they took the coxswain—Fox—with them, and renewed their exploration. They had proceeded but a short distance, when, as the reader has anticipated, they were surrounded and made prisoners. Dr. Wright, presenting a pistol, and saying something about the necessity of returning to the boat for the rest of his men—making a brisk stern-board all the while—made good his escape before the enemy recovered from his surprise; and jumping into his boat, in double-quick time, pulled off to the brig, with the unwelcome intelligence. The next day, I sent the prisoners, through the English Consul, their clothes and effects, and the purser supplied them with a small sum of money to meet their present necessities.

On the 8th December, while endeavoring to cut off a vessel, which was apparently intending to run the blockade, I was struck by a heavy norther, and capsized and sunk in *ten minutes*; losing about one half my crew, which consisted of seventy-six persons, all told!

The following official letters will give the reader all the necessary details of this sad catastrophe—a catastrophe which threw a temporary gloom over the squadron, and robbed many families in the United States in mourning; but which no human foresight could have guarded against, or prevented:

“U. S. STEAMER MISSISSIPPI,

“*Anton Lizardo, Dec. 12, 1846.*

“SIR:—In the absence of Commodore Conner, it becomes my painful duty to inform the Department of the unfortunate loss of the U. S. Brig Somers; which vessel capsized and sunk in a heavy gust (the commencement of a norther), the day before yesterday, about 10 o'clock, A. M.

“By the inclosed papers it will be seen, that of seventy-six persons, composing her crew, thirty-nine were lost, including two officers, Acting Sailing-Master Clemson, and Passed Midshipman Hynson. Many of the remainder were saved by the extraordinary exertions of the officers and men of the English, French, and Spanish vessels of war, lying at Sacrificios, and in full view of the scene of the disaster. In the midst of a strong gale, and at imminent hazard, they put off in their boats, and succeeded in saving fourteen lives. Indeed, there was displayed on the occasion, by these gallant men, a generous rivalry in the struggle to be foremost, in the noble and daring enterprise.

“Nothing was known of the afflicting accident at this anchorage, until yesterday. Early in the morning, I sent the steamer Petrita, to Sacrificios, with dispatches for Commodore Conner, to be put on board an English vessel of war, about sailing for Tampico. The officer in charge of the dispatches, on going on board the frigate Endymion, learned, for the first time, the distressing intelligence, and met there several of the survivors, all of whom had been received in the kindest manner.

“They were immediately embarked on board the Petrita; and after visiting the spot where the Somers sunk, and examining the

neighborhood of the reef, the steamer returned and communicated to us intelligence of the calamity.

"The sloop of war, 'John Adams,' and the American brig 'Abrasia,' passed near to the Somers shortly before the fatal accident. She was then seen standing off from the reef.

"The Somers had been performing the most active blockading duties for several months, exposed to every vicissitude of weather, and the 'John Adams,' Commander McCluney, had been ordered to take her place. Her long and arduous cruise would have ended to-day or to-morrow, and nothing now detains the 'John Adams' from going to sea, but a renewal of the gale; which makes it impracticable and dangerous for her to leave her present anchorage. The moment the weather moderates, she will assume the blockade, and, if necessary, will be towed out by a steamer, the commander of which will have orders again to examine the vicinity of the wreck, in the hope of recovering some of the bodies. Commander McCluney, while cruising in the neighborhood, will also be instructed to keep a diligent watch for the same object.

"I inclose, herewith, a copy of the report of Lieutenant Commanding Semmes, with a list of the names of the survivors of the wreck, as well as of those who were lost. I inclose, also, copies of communications, which my feelings of gratitude and duty prompted me to address to the naval officers at Sacrificios, at the first moment of hearing of their gallant and generous acts.

"I have the honor to be, your most obedient servant,

"M. C. PERRY.

"The Hon. JOHN Y. MASON, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C."

---

"U. S. FRIGATE RARITAN,

"*Anton Lisardo, December 10th, 1846.*

"SIR:—It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the loss of the U. S. Brig Somers, late under my command, and of the drowning of more than half her crew. The details of this sad catastrophe are briefly, as follows: After having been forty-five days maintaining the blockade of Vera Cruz, I anchored, on the evening of the 7th inst., under Verde Island; where it had been my practice to take shelter from the north-west gales, that blow

with such frequency and violence along this coast, at this season of the year. Soon after sunrise, the next morning, a sail having been descried from the mast-head, I immediately got under-way, and commenced beating up, between the *Verde* Island, and *Pazaros* reefs. In a short time, I was enabled, with my glass, to make out the strange sail to be a man-of-war; whereupon, I hoisted my number, and had the satisfaction, in fifteen or twenty minutes more, to see the stranger show that of the 'John Adams.'

"The wind, which had been blowing from the W. N. W., when we got under-way, gradually hauled to the northward, and settled, for awhile, at N. N. E. The barometer having fallen, the night previous, to 29.80 in., and being still down, and the weather looking still unsettled, I was apprehensive of a gale. As soon, therefore, as the 'John Adams' showed her number, I wore and ran down toward *Verde* Island, with the view of coming to, and getting my vessel snug before the gale should come on. When I had nearly approached the anchorage, the look-out, at the mast-head, cried 'sail—ho!' a second time. On applying my glass in the direction indicated from aloft, I perceived this second sail to be a brig, in the N. E., standing apparently for Vera Cruz (she did afterward, run between the inner *Anegada*, and the *Blanquilla*). I immediately abandoned my intention of anchoring, as the gale had not yet set in, and hauling on a wind, under topsails and courses, commenced beating up the passage, a second time, with the view of placing myself between the strange sail and the port, to prevent the possibility of her running the blockade, if she should be so inclined. I made one tack toward the *Pazaros* reef, and, at the time of the catastrophe, was standing on the larboard tack, with the northern point of *Verde* Island reef, a couple of points on my lee-bow. We were still under topsails, courses, jib and spanker; and the brig did not appear to be too much pressed. I was, myself, standing on the lee-arm-chest, having just passed over from the weather quarter, and with my spy-glass in hand, was observing the reef on our lee-bow, to see whether it were possible to weather it, or, in the event of our not being able to do this, to give timely notice to the officer of the deck to tack ship. I had not been long in this position, before the officer of the deck, Lieutenant James L. Parker, the second Lieutenant of the brig,

remarked to me, that he thought it looked a little squally to windward. I immediately passed over to the weather side, and as it looked a little darker than it had done, I ordered him to haul up the mainsail, and brail up the spanker, and directed the helm to be put up. These orders were promptly obeyed. Lieutenant Parker took the mainsail off her, and had got the spanker about half brailed up, when the squall struck us. It did not appear to be very violent, nor was its approach accompanied by any foaming of the water, or other indications, which usually mark the approach of heavy squalls. But the brig being flying-light, having scarcely any water or provisions, and but six tons of ballast on board, she was thrown over almost instantly, so far as to refuse to obey her helm—the pressure of the water on the lee-bow rather inclining her to luff; seeing which, I directed the helm to be put down, hoping that I might luff and shake the wind out of her sails, until the force of the squall should be spent. The quartermaster at the helm, had hardly time to obey this order, before the brig was on her beam-ends, and the water pouring into every hatch and scuttle. Being now convinced that she must speedily go down, unless relieved, I ordered the masts to be cut away. The officers and men, who, with few exceptions, had by this time gained the weather bulwarks of the vessel, immediately began to cut away the rigging. But as this was a forlorn hope, the brig filling very fast, and her masts and yards lying flat upon the surface of the sea, I placed no reliance, whatever, on their efforts. A few moments more, and I was convinced, in spite of all our exertions, the brig must inevitably go down. I accordingly turned my attention to the saving of as many lives as possible. The boats secured in the gripes, amidships, and the starboard-quarter boat, were already several feet under water, so that it was impossible to reach them; but we succeeded in disengaging the larboard quarter boat from her davits (a small boat pulling five oars), and dropped her, fortunately, to leeward of the brig, to prevent her being thrown upon the vessel's side, and crushed by the sea. I ordered Midshipman F. G. Clark to take charge of this boat, and with the purser, surgeon, and seventeen men, make for *Verde* Island, if possible; and after having landed all but the boat's crew, to return and save others. It was now blowing a strong



gale, with a heavy sea running, and I deemed it imprudent to trust more men, in so small a boat. Beside, I was anxious to shove her off, before the vessel should sink, lest there might be a rush for her, and no life at all be saved. I cannot refrain from expressing, in this place, my admiration of the noble conduct of several of the men, embarked in this boat, who implored the officers, by name, to take their places; saying that they would willingly die by the wreck, if the officers would but save themselves. Of course, none of these generous fellows were permitted to come out, and they were all, subsequently, safely landed, as they deserved to be. Midshipman Clark, fortunately, succeeded in shoving off, and pulling some twenty paces from the brig before she went down. When she was on the point of sinking beneath us, and engulfing us in the waves, I gave the order, "Every man save himself who can!" whereupon, there was a simultaneous plunge into the sea, of about sixty officers and men, each striving to secure some frail object that had drifted from the wreck, for the purpose of sustaining himself, in the awful struggle with the sea, which awaited him. Some reached a grating, some an oar, some a boat's mast, some a hen-coop, etc.; but many poor fellows sprang into the sea, to perish in a few minutes, not being able to find any object of support. Lieutenant Parker and myself, being both swimmers, were fortunate enough to reach one of the arm-chests' gratings, which afforded us partial support, but on which we should inevitably have been drowned, if we had not, when we had swum some twenty or thirty paces, secured an upper half-port, which came drifting by us. We lashed this, with the lanyards attached to it, to our grating, and thenceforth got along much better. Midshipman Clark, after he had landed the officers and men under his charge, at *Verde* Island, shoved off, a second time, in obedience to the order I had given him, at the imminent peril of his life—for the gale was now blowing with much violence, and the sea running so heavily, that it seemed impossible that so small a boat could live—and skirted *Verde* Island reef, to see if it were possible to rescue any of us from the waves. His efforts were rewarded with partial success, as he picked up Lieutenant Parker and myself, and one of the seamen. As soon as I had landed, I sent Midshipman Clark out again; who ventured as far from the

island as he thought his boat would live; but this time he returned unsuccessful, having been unable to descry any floating object, whatever. Lieutenant Claiborne saved himself on a small hatch, about two feet square, used for covering the pump-well, and which he found floating near the wreck. He was thrown, with great violence, upon a reef, near Sacrificios, but fortunately escaped without serious injury. As strange as it may appear to you, there cannot have elapsed more than ten minutes, between our being struck by the squall, and the total disappearance of the Somers. I feel that I should not be doing justice to the officers and men who were under my command, on this melancholy occasion, if I were to close this report, without bearing testimony to their uniform coolness and self-possession, under the trying circumstances in which we were placed; the alacrity with which they obeyed my orders,\* and when all was over, the generosity with which they behaved toward each other in the water, where the struggle was one of life and death.

"I have thus concluded, what I had to say, in relation to the causes of the disaster, and our own exertions; but with heart-felt acknowledgments, it remains for me to inform you of the gallant and feeling manner, in which all the foreign men-of-war, lying at Sacrificios, came to our rescue. They hoisted out and manned boats, immediately, and, at the hazard of their lives, put out

---

\* Those men who could not swim, were selected to go in the boat. A large man, by the name of Seymour, the ship's cook, having got into her, he was commanded by Lieutenant Parker to come out, in order that he might make room for two smaller men, and he *obeyed the order*. He was afterward permitted to return to her, however, when it was discovered that he could not swim. Passed Midshipman Hynson, a promising young officer, who had been partially disabled by a bad burn, received in firing the Creole, a few days previously, was particularly implored to go into the boat. A lad by the name of Nutter, jumped out of the boat, and offered his place to Hynson, and a man by the name of Powers, did the same thing. Hynson refusing both offers, these men declared that then others might take their places, as they were resolved to abide on the wreck with him. Hynson and Powers were drowned. Nutter was saved. When the plunge was made into the sea, Sailing-Master Clemson seized a studding-sail boom, in company with five of the seamen. Being a swimmer, and perceiving that the boom was not sufficiently buoyant to support them all, he left it, and struck out alone. He perished—the five men were saved.

toward the wreck. They were, at first, driven back, by the violence of the wind and sea, but renewed their efforts upon the first lull; and had the unhopèd-for satisfaction of saving fourteen more of our unfortunate companions.

"To Captain Lambert, of the English frigate, *Endymion*; Captain Frankland, of the English corvette, *Alarm*; Commander Matson, of the English brig, *Daring*; Captain Dubut, of the French brig, *Mercure*; Captain Labredoyaire, of the French brig, *Pylade*; and Captain Puente, of the Spanish corvette, *Luisa Fernandez*, who all sent boats, and supplied us with clothing, and hospitably entertained us on board their ships, we owe a lasting debt of gratitude. In conclusion, I respectfully request that at as early a day as convenient, you will order a Court of Inquiry, to investigate my conduct in this unfortunate affair.

"I append lists of the officers and men saved, and drowned, respectively; with the remark that I have some faint hope, that a very few of those, whom I have reported drowned, may have reached the main-land, some ten miles distant. I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"R. SEMMES, Lieut. Com'd'g.

"COMMODORE M. C. PERRY, 'Second in Command,' Home Squadron."

## CHAPTER VI.

ARTHUR ordered to the flag-ship as flag-lieutenant—Reinforcement of the squadron—The campaign in the north of Mexico—Rumors of the arrival of General Scott, and of a campaign against the city of Mexico—The port of Vera Cruz described—Its harbor—The northers—Gale in the Somers—Gale in the storeship Electra, in the bight of Alvarado—The somers—Its terrible ravages—Its characteristics.

COMMODORE CONNER, returning from Tampico, a few days after this disaster, ordered the usual court of inquiry to sit on my conduct, and soon afterward re-attached me to the flag-ship, as his flag-lieutenant, in place of poor Morris, who had been killed.—The winter passed away without events of much importance. The sloop-of-war Albany, Captain Breese, joined us, as did the steamer Spitfire, Commander Tatnall, and several other small vessels. The commander-in-chief's flag was transferred from the frigate Cumberland, to the frigate Raritan; and the former sent home, under Captain Gregory, who, previous to joining us, had made a long cruise on the coast of Brazil. Commodore Perry also returned to the United States, in the steamer Mississippi, which required some repairs of her machinery. This latter vessel constantly excited the admiration of the squadron, by her immense power, and superior qualities as a sea-boat. She would take a whole squadron of small vessels in tow, without being, to all appearance, in the least degree checked in her speed; and reminded one, on such occasions, of some giant old patriarch, surrounded by a race of puny descendants. The blockade was actively maintained; the commodore keeping his vessels constantly on the move, and relieving them at regular intervals. The Porpoise, and some of the other small craft, were occasionally dispatched to Laguna, and other points along the coast, for fruits, vegetables, and beef-cattle; which contributed greatly to the health and comfort of the crews; and private store-vessels began to find their way to us, from New Orleans and other ports, by means of which the officers

supplied their messes abundantly, and replaced their soiled and torn linen, with new—paying about cent. per cent.; which, I believe, merchants consider rather a fair profit.

Rumors began to reach us, about this time, that the government meditated an attack on Vera Cruz; and that this point would, when captured, be made a base of operations for a campaign against the city of Mexico. We had long wondered, in the squadron, at the apparent folly of the government in attacking the northern provinces of Mexico,\* which were so sparsely populated, and so far removed from the center of the enemy's power. It seemed to us unmilitary men, that common sense required us to strike at our enemy in some vital part, instead of belaboring his extremities, which could be productive of no decisive result. General Taylor should never have been permitted to cross the Rio Grande. All the blood, and treasure, and time which have been expended on Monterey and Buena Vista, if we except the luster which has been added to our arms, have been utterly thrown away. There were, at one time, eighteen thousand troops on the line extending from the mouth of the Rio Grande, by way of Camargo, to Saltillo; mostly volunteers, raised and equipped at an enormous expense to the government, and transported at an expense still greater; and what was the result? I think I do not affirm too much when I say, that, although General Taylor had beaten the enemy—and gloriously for our arms—at all the points at which he had encountered him, he had accomplished but little toward bringing the war to a close. What recked the mass of the Mexican population, concentrated on the great plains, and in the *tierras calientes* adjoining, if Coahuila, Chihuahua, and New Mexico had been overrun and occupied by our troops?—These provinces were five hundred miles and more, distant from

---

\* The campaign, in the north of Mexico, was an error brought about by the easy credulity with which the administration of Mr. Polk listened to ignorant men, who pretended to be well informed on Mexican affairs. These men impressed the administration with the belief, that the northern states of Mexico were ready for revolt against the central authority, and only awaited the presence of an American army, to declare themselves in our favor. The administration soon found out, that there was no truth in these statements, and promptly remedied its error, by changing its line of operations.

them, and were inhabited only by the Indian *ranchero*. They did not feel, in consequence, any of the pressure of war, and saw none of its evils. Even when Santa Anna was beaten at Buena Vista, and retreated upon the capital, they sang a *Te Deum* in honor of his success, and buckled on their armor all the more securely for another conflict. The case was very different, when the bloody sword and the firebrand were carried to their own hearths. From the moment that the stripes and stars were unfolded from the cupola of the government house, in Mexico, the war was ended—the enemy, having been stabbed to the heart, was dead. But we will not anticipate events; and while General Scott is marshaling his forces and preparing for the descent, let us take a little closer look at Vera Cruz and its environs, that we may the better understand the events of the coming campaign.

Vera Cruz is situated in about the latitude of  $19^{\circ} 10'$  north, or a little more than four degrees within the tropic. It is the only port on the whole Gulf coast of Mexico, where a vessel of war—other than gun-brigs, and smaller craft—can anchor. Old Bernal Diaz tells us, that the pilots of Cortez compared the harbor to a “pocket full of holes;” a description which gives us a good idea of it at the present day. The city fronts the sea, to the north-east. Beginning at the reef of sand and rocks, a little to the northward and eastward of the city, known as the *Gallega*, and on which the castle of *San Juan de Ulloa* is situated, a continuous chain of reefs, and small islands, extends around, by east, toward the south, as far as *Sacrificios*—about three miles from the castle. Between these reefs and islands, excellent channels, having sufficient water for the largest ships, lead into and out of the anchorage abreast of the city—hence the description, “pocket full of holes.” The best anchorage is within the triangle formed by the city, the castle, and a rock abreast of the former, called the *Lavandera*. In this triangle, the holding-ground is good, being composed of ooze and sand; and the depth of water is from three to five and a half fathoms—the deepest water being near the castle. *Sacrificios* is the usual anchorage for men-of-war—Mexican jealousy not permitting them to approach nearer the city. There is perhaps, too, some reason in the prohibition, as the harbor is small, and the presence of large ships of war might

incommoded the merchant-men, in receiving and discharging their cargoes. This "pocket full of holes" is open to the north-west, which is the quarter whence the terrible "*Nortes*"—north-west gales—come sweeping down the coast; and is consequently anything but a secure anchorage during the winter season. The present city of Vera Cruz is not the city of the same name, first built by Cortez.—This chieftain landed here, but being dissatisfied with the country and with the harbor—the former being a series of arid sand-hills, and far removed from the inhabited districts, and the latter affording him but indifferent shelter for his ships—he directed his pilots, Alaminos and Alvarez, to reconnoiter the coast to the northward and westward, in search of a better site. They cruised as far as the mouth of the Panuco—on which Tampico is situated—and returning, after an absence of eight or ten days, reported that, at the distance of about twelve leagues from the point where they then were, they had discovered a fortified city, called by the natives Quiahuitlan, situated about a league from the sea-shore; and that there was a large rock in front of it, not far from the coast, which would afford protection to the ships from the northers. This rock they named Bernal—the present Bernal Chico. Alaminos, in whom Cortez had always great confidence, having given it as his opinion, that this port was preferable to that of Ulloa—which name the adventurers had already given to the modern port of Vera Cruz—they resolved to remove thither.

It may not be amiss to remark, by the way, that Cortez, before breaking up his encampment to remove to the newly-found port, gave, on the sand-hills where now stands the modern Vera Cruz, the first illustrious example of a *pronunciamiento*, which has been so faithfully followed by his descendants, and especially by the good city itself. A few of the more prominent of his followers, among whom was the doughty old captain and historian, Bernal Diaz, before mentioned, after having felt their way by sundry intrigues, revolted against Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, under whose auspices the expedition had been started, and proclaimed their favorite chief, Captain-General, and pronounced him independent of all authority, save that of the king.

It was in a plain, then, in the neighborhood of this fortified city of Quiahuitlan, and in the little cove formed by the towering

rock, known by mariners of the present day, as the *Bernal Chico*, that the first Vera Cruz was built. This was the city from which Cortez took his departure for the capital of Montezuma, and in which he left his friend, *Juan de Escalante*, to guard him against any "fire in his rear," from his quondam superior, Diego Velasquez. It was named *Villa rica de Vera Cruz*—Rich city of the True Cross—because Cortez had landed on Holy Friday, called by the Spaniards Holy Friday of the Cross,—and because Alonso de Puertocarrero, in allusion to Cortez' becoming captain-general, had said to him, upon landing, "behold the rich lands which you should learn to govern!" Almost all the names given by the Spanish explorers and conquerors were, like this, paraphrases, or little histories of the circumstances under which the places had been discovered or conquered. Soon after the conquest of Mexico, but at what precise time, is not known, the inhabitants of the new city, finding the opinion given by the pilot Alaminos, as to the security of their harbor, incorrect, removed lower down the coast, to the mouth of the small river Antigua. Writers on this subject make the common mistake of supposing the city, founded at this latter place, to have been the first city of Vera Cruz.

But the Antigua, for want of a sufficient depth of water on its bar, was no better adapted to commercial purposes than *Bernal Chico*; and the town proving to be very unhealthy, by reason of its low, marshy situation, this position was, in turn, abandoned, toward the close of the sixteenth century, in favor of the present city of Vera Cruz. To any one, who has lain at anchor at Anton Lizardo, it seems strange that this excellent harbor should have been overlooked by the Spaniards, and subsequently by the Mexicans, in their search after a port. It is perfectly protected from all winds; has a good and capacious anchoring ground; and by the aid of piers, the materials for the construction of which (in the omnipresent coral rock) are at hand in great abundance, could be made as convenient a port for the discharging and receiving of merchandise, as could be required. From October until April, or six months in the year, during the prevalence of the northers, all communication between the shipping in the port of Vera Cruz and the town, is completely cut off, for at least one-third of this time. As time is money, what an immense drawback is not this



to commerce?—a drawback, which, I venture to say, our people would have removed long since, if they had been compelled to build a sea-wall half round the Gulf, to accomplish it. From an inspection of the topography of Anton Lizardo too, I should be inclined to the opinion, that the location would be much more healthy, than that of Vera Cruz. But this discussion is premature—it will probably be practically settled, in a generation or two more; when, in the fullness of events, Time, with his hoary wand, shall have beckoned us on a little farther southward. The city of Vera Cruz is of moderate dimensions; it not being, from wall to wall, in any direction, more than about four thousand feet, or a little over two-thirds of a statute mile. It is substantially built, of sandstone, and a species of madrepora; and from a short distance, seaward, presents a beautiful and highly picturesque appearance, with its numerous cupolas and church spires towering majestically above the surrounding buildings, and glittering, of a bright day, like so much burnished silver; reminding one of a passage in the history of the conquerors; one of whose scouts, in his excited imagination, at first mistook the white-washed walls of *Cempoala*, a neighboring town, for the precious metal, and came flying back, with loosened rein, to give the glad tidings to his companions. On a nearer approach, it becomes more somber in appearance; the walls, in many places, being blackened by damps and mildew, and the heavy architecture of the churches and convents carrying one back to the feudal ages. Being a walled and intrenched city, it is a fortification in its whole extent; the massive stone houses being so many citadels, into which its defenders might retreat, after the outer works were carried. The shape of the walls is hexagonal, or nearly so, and at the gates, and the angles of the wall, batteries were mounted—during the siege—to the number of ten or eleven. These batteries commanded, of course, the approaches in front, as well as swept and enfiladed the ditches. Parts of these ditches were strengthened with palisades and "*troups de loups*." In addition to these defenses, at each sea-end of the city, there was a large and well constructed fortress, armed with heavy cannon—the fortress at the north end, being called Conception, and that at the south end, Santiago. The sea-wall, or massive curtain which connected these two

forts, was a formidable water battery in its entire length. The streets were also broken up, and barricaded, and cannon were placed in position to command them. The formidable castle of San Juan de Ulloa, which sat frowning at the distance of not quite a third of a mile from the city, was very heavily armed with guns which had been cast—many of them—in the United States, a short time before, under the presidency of Santa Anna, who always regarded Vera Cruz as the key of the Mexican territory, and who, in anticipation of a war with us, had put the defenses of the castle in thorough repair. In short, without burthening the memory of the reader with further details, it will be sufficient to inform him, that the aggregate of the armament of all the fortifications, amounted to about four hundred pieces of cannon, large and small; and that the cost of the fortifications proper, excluding the city walls, has been, first and last, fifty millions of dollars!

On the north-west angle of the castle, rises high above the walls—the walls themselves being about sixty feet above the surface of the sea—the only lighthouse on any part of the Mexican coast. This structure alone, which was built by the consulate of Vera Cruz, cost nearly a hundred thousand dollars. The lantern was constructed in London, on a plan devised by the celebrated astronomer, *Mendoza y Rios*. The lamps and reflectors are attached to a gyratory triangle, which is put in motion by a system of clock machinery; and the lights become invisible, consequently, whenever one of the points of the triangle is turned toward the entrance of the port. There is no light on any part of the coast of the United States superior to this. They burned it for a long time after the commencement of the blockade; and I have often admired it, of a dark and stormy night, as it assured me, by the alternate brilliant flashes of its lantern, and their sudden disappearance in total darkness, of my position. No one but a mariner beset on a coast like that of Vera Cruz, by currents of unknown direction and velocity, and by dangerous reefs, but to touch which would be fatal, can appreciate the value of so friendly a beacon. After the battle of Buena Vista, it was extinguished; and our night-watching, off the beleaguered port, henceforth became more incessant and anxious than ever. The consulate of Vera Cruz,

of which I have spoken, as having constructed this lighthouse, it may be necessary to inform the reader, was a kind of municipal corporation, composed of merchants; which, beside being a tribunal for the summary settlement of commercial disputes, had charge of the preservation of the port, the construction of roads, the administration of hospitals, the police of the city, etc. It consisted of a prior, two consuls, a syndic, an assessor, and nine other members. Its manner of deciding causes, may be worth mentioning, in this day of tedious and expensive litigation. It judged them *gratis*, after hearing the oral statements of the parties, and without the intervention of lawyers! As Vera Cruz was formerly the *entrepôt*, through which all the commerce with the mother country was carried on—Acapulco having been confined, as we have seen, to a single annual galleon to and from Manila—this juridico-mercantile corporation rose to great distinction, and usually numbered among its members the most enlightened and influential merchants of the country.

The division of the year into four seasons, as with us, is inapplicable to the latitude of Vera Cruz. There are but two seasons known here—the season of rains, beginning in April and lasting until October, and the dry season, running through the rest of the year. Each of these seasons has its scourge; the rainy season bringing with it the terrible *vomito*—yellow fever—and the dry season, the no less terrible scourge of the mariner, the norther. These winter gales are the most furious periodical winds known anywhere in America; and are probably owing to the peculiar formation of the coast. The Cordilleras, that form, as it were, the backbone of Mexico, run through the whole length of the country, in a north-west direction; and continue through the United States and British America, under the appellation of the Rocky Mountains, until they reach (with a very slight variation of course) the polar seas. It is along this extensive range of rugged and snow-clad mountains, running through fifty degrees of latitude, that these terrible gales sweep; their general direction being from north-west to south-east; veering to the northward as the gale increases. From the eastern base of these mountains, immense plains stretch forth, which, in Mexico, are known as the *tierras calientes*. These plains, which are, for the most part, arid and

sandy, become heated, under the rays of a tropical sun, to an intense degree ; the air becomes proportionally rarefied ; and in this way, nature prepares the vacuum, which she is afterward in such haste to fill. The northerly rage with peculiar violence, in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, in consequence, probably, of the nearer approach of the mountains to the sea. The severest gale I ever experienced, in any part of the world, I encountered in the brig *Somers*, while at anchor under Green Island. It blew for three days and nights—the usual time of their duration—and with such violence that we could not show ourselves above the hammock-rail, without imminent danger of being taken off our feet. Although my yards and top-masts were down, and I had two good anchors ahead, with long scopes of well-tried chain, I feared every moment to be driven on shore. As the waves would strike the vessel, every timber and plank in her would tremble and quiver as though she were being shaken in pieces. When the gale had blown itself out, and we began to put our little bark in order again for a cruise, we found her incrustated, as high as the mast-heads, with a coating of salt from the effects of the spray, which she dashed from her bows, as she had risen gallantly over the seas. Such is the occasional force of these gales, that about the year 1790, the Spanish ship-of-the-line *Castile*, although moored to one of the ravelins of the castle with nine cables, was driven furiously from her fastenings, and stranded on the point Hornos, about a mile south of the city ! Her cables being good, she would have rode out the gale in safety, but for the drawing of the brass mooring swivels from the massive stone-masonry in which they were secured. While the gales are raging, vessels in the offing never think of seeking refuge in the port—not that this is not of sufficiently easy access, in all kinds of weather, but because it would be impossible to bring them up with their anchors, in coming to. The only resource, in such a case, is to haul off to the eastward, and endeavor, under storm-sail—if it be possible to carry any sail at all—to clear the outer *Anegada* ; a sunken reef south-east of the city. Having cleared this, there is no further cause for anxiety ; as, should the ship drift as far as the banks of Yucatan—and her drift will be in that direction—she may anchor, with the certainty of being able to hold on, as soon as she reaches six or seven

fathoms of water. The wind, which, off Vera Cruz, draws down the coast, in a line nearly parallel to it, blows with much more violence near the shore, than farther out at sea. Vessels which take the norther with an offing of from sixty to a hundred miles, will find it little more than an ordinary winter gale, such as are experienced off our northern coast. The regularity with which these winds appear is remarkable; there being about four days' interval between them, which is scarcely ever varied. And, as they continue three days, it follows that it is blowing a norther a little more than half the time, at Vera Cruz, during the winter season. They are not so frequent in October and March, though often quite as severe. As a general rule, they disappear about the middle of April; though there have been instances of their having occurred as late as June, and even July.

While in command of the store-ship *Electra*, toward the latter part of the war, I experienced an unexpected norther, as late as the 10th of June. Commodore Perry directed me to anchor off Alvarado, for the purpose of receiving on board a detachment of marines, which I was to convey to Laguna, to garrison that place. As Alvarado lies in a dangerous bight (bend) of the coast, in which a ship tails on shore during the prevalence of the gale; and as the wind drives a leeward current into this bend, of from two to three knots an hour, it had always been thought a very dangerous anchorage. Commodore Perry and I had, therefore, discussed the probability of the occurrence of northers, at this season; and, as the precedents in the books were all in our favor, we concluded to run the risk.

The following extracts, from my log-book, show that it is possible for a vessel to save herself, in a norther, even in the bight of Alvarado, if, instead of getting under-way, she remains at her anchors; a fact, which it may be worth the while of those who trade to this port to remember:

"Anton Lizardo, Saturday, June 10th, 1848. Morning cloudy, with squalls of wind and rain, off the land. Got under-way soon after day-light, in company with the storeship *Relief*, Lieutenant Poor—bound to the United States—and stood out to sea, to the southward and eastward. Calm toward noon. About half-past twelve, a light breeze from the northward and eastward. At

half-past two, came to with the port anchor, off the bar of Alvarado, in twelve fathoms water, soft bottom, with the center of the remarkable sand-bluff, on the eastern side of the entrance to the river, bearing S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E., and the bluff point on the western side bearing S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E.; the ship being distant from the bar about three miles. Half an hour after anchoring, it commenced blowing a norther; veered to sixty fathoms; double-reefed and furled the top-sails [to be ready, to endeavor to make an offing, in case I parted my ground-tackle], and sent down the top-gallant yards. It blew fresh all night, and a current of three knots commenced running to the southward and eastward, soon after the gale set in; rendering it, to all appearance, impossible for any ship, under canvas, to "claw off." Lightning during the night, in the north, and in the S. and S. E.

"Sunday, June 11th. About two, A. M., the wind, which, up to this time, had been blowing a gale, suddenly died away almost entirely, and hauled to west; where it remained a couple of hours. At four, it hauled again to N. N. W., and increased, as the day advanced, accompanied by cirro-stratus, and a scud, so low that it seemed almost to touch our mast-heads. From two to four, P. M., it blew furiously; let go the starboard anchor underfoot, and bit a slack-chain, to provide against the contingency of parting the riding-cable, and sent down the top-gallant masts. The ship pitching uneasily into a head-sea; gave her a turn and a half of starboard-helm, which, bringing the sea from one to two points on the starboard bow, caused her to ride much more easily. It has now been blowing a gale twenty-four hours, and there has been no sea raised to prevent a ship's making perfectly good weather; and I am convinced, that the heaviest winter gales might be rode out, here, in security, by vessels having good chains and anchors, and occupying about our position; which gives good holding-ground, and a depth of water, in which but little sea can be raised [owing, no doubt, to the partial shelter afforded by the distant reefs in the neighborhood of Anton Lizardo].

"June 12th. The norther has continued all day, though with abated violence; making the third day of a norther in June; an occurrence which does not probably take place once in a generation. The muddy waters of the river, which had been pent up by

the gale, rushed out, despite of it, this afternoon, and discolored the water of the sea, for several miles around."

These unwelcome gales are preceded by many signs; one of which is the unusual moisture with which the S. E. wind—the trade-wind of the summer season, and which prevails in the intervals between the northers—comes charged (the dew-point of a clear day being frequently but two or three degrees below the ordinary temperature of the atmosphere); and another, the remarkable transparency of the atmosphere, toward sunset and sunrise. Nothing can exceed the beauty of that portion of the Mexican coast in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, as seen, on a lovely evening, through the medium of one of these storm precursors. The sea-breeze dies away gradually, as the sun declines; not a speck of cloud is seen anywhere in the heavens, and the bold and broken outline of the coast becomes visible for many leagues, north and south. The lofty range of the Cordilleras, which, in ordinary states of the atmosphere, is invisible, or but faintly descried, stands out boldly to view, robed in the "azure hue" of the poet, and throwing aloft its giant peaks, many thousand feet above the surrounding elevations. Prince among these, is Orizaba, rising with the regularity of a faultless cone, to the height of seventeen thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea, and having its hoary summit covered, for the distance of five thousand perpendicular feet, with perpetual snow. This giant mountain is a notable land-mark for the mariner, and may occasionally be seen many leagues at sea, re-assuring him of his position; but when seen too distinctly, in the season of northers, not inviting him to too near an approach to the coast. It is a common saying, among the seamen who trade to Vera Cruz, "there's a norther brewing; old Orizaba shows us his nightcap." While cruising on the blockade, I have seen this noble mountain distinctly, from a distance of one hundred and ten miles—so distinctly that the various ravines, down which have thundered, from time to time, avalanches of snow, and the other inequalities which seam and scar his rugged face, might all be traced in detail. This mountain was formerly a volcano, but its fires have long since become extinct. The force of the norther is much diminished on the western coast of Mexico.

I have been thus particular in describing this wind, because it

is *exi generis*, and presents many points of curious speculation for the meteorologist. It is, beside, as powerful an ally of its native coast, as it is a troublesome obstacle to an invader, or blockader; and it would be a great mistake in the commander of a fleet, or the general of an army, not to give it a prominent place among the objects to be considered, in the arrangement of his plan of operations.

When the norther has ceased to scour the coast in pursuit of victims, the *vomito* begins its more silent, but not less deadly, approaches. This scourge is not only the terror of the Americans and Europeans who trade with Vera Cruz, but is equally dreaded by the inhabitants of the interior of the country. When it prevails badly as an epidemic, almost all intercourse with the *platacos* of the Cordilleras is suspended. Even the hardy *arrieros*, or mule-drivers, who are the common carriers of commerce, cease their regular visits to and from the infected city; when the whole interior of the country suffers more or less for want of its accustomed supplies. So pure and salubrious is the air of the upland regions, that an inhabitant of Puebla or Mexico, on descending to Vera Cruz, is more liable to take the disease than most foreigners. As Vera Cruz is the only seaport of any importance on the Mexican Gulf, and transacts three-fourths of the foreign business of the country, it is readily seen how pernicious an influence the prevalence of the *vomito* exercises on the pursuits of the mass of the population. Even the mines, to which delay is death, in consequence of the vast amount of capital invested in them, not unfrequently suffer for want of quicksilver (used extensively for separating the precious metals, and almost all of which is imported from the mines of Almaden, in Spain), and the necessary machinery—none of which is manufactured in the country—for carrying on their operations. Indeed, so seriously have the inconveniences of this epidemic been felt, that, on more than one occasion, the question has been discussed of razing the city to the ground, and abandoning it altogether. This was the case in 1762, and again in 1801 and in 1802; in which years, the disease was more than usually destructive of life. The question was finally decided in favor of the city, principally on the ground that it would be impolitic to abandon so much public and private



property—the fortifications alone, having cost, as we have seen, the round sum of fifty millions of dollars. Another plan, which has been discussed, of lessening the evil, so far as the interior of the country is concerned, is the rendering more direct, and thus shortening, the road from Encerro—on the first step of the Cordilleras, and elevated just above the line of yellow fever—to the city. At present, this road makes a detour by the way of Plan del Rio, and the National Bridge over the Antigua, near the Ventanilla. If, instead of making this detour, the Antigua were bridged lower down, the road from Encerro to Vera Cruz, might be traced, almost on a bee-line; and thus ten or twelve hours of travel might be saved. It is this travel, through a sandy desert, and beneath the scorching rays of a sun in the zenith—the sun passes the zenith of Vera Cruz about the middle of May, on his way northward, and returns to it again about the latter part of July—more than the delay in the city, which prepares the system for the reception of the epidemic. These various discussions will give the reader an idea of the terror with which the *vomito* inspires the inhabitants of the mountain slopes, and elevated plains. Experience would seem to show, that extreme heat alone does not produce yellow fever. There are many islands in the West Indies, farther south than Vera Cruz—the Danish island of Santa Cruz, for instance—where the disease is unknown. But what is more remarkable, this scourge does not prevail on the western coast of Mexico. Even the unhealthy town of Acapulco, which, according to the observations of Humboldt, has a higher mean temperature throughout the year, than Vera Cruz, is exempt from it. Malignant bilious and remittent fevers prevail here, but as yet there have been no well marked cases of the *vomito*. Our squadron, which remained all the summer of 1846 in the vicinity of Vera Cruz—holding, of course, no intercourse with the shore—had no fever. The seamen were crowded in small spaces—there being as many as two hundred men on board a sloop-of-war of eight or nine hundred tons—were exposed to the same heat, somewhat tempered by the sea-breezes, slept in the open air on the decks, in their night watches, and were frequently drenched with rain, both day and night; and yet they experienced no inconvenience. And the reason, no doubt, was, that under Commodore Conner's

excellent system of discipline, the between decks were kept dry and well ventilated; and the men, every evening, at sunset quarters, were required to exchange their lighter duck-frocks and trowsers for woolen ones. Many valuable officers and men fell a sacrifice, in the following year; but we were then in possession of the enemy's ports and coast; and it was necessary to maintain a constant communication with the shore, and even to garrison many points. It would seem to follow, from all these facts, that the *vomito* of Vera Cruz is local, and must, therefore, be produced by malaria arising somewhere in the vicinity of the town; accordingly, although the city, as seen from the sea, appears to be situated in the midst of a desert of sand, upon a closer examination, we shall find many facts and circumstances to confirm this opinion. The desert is not an open plain, over which the purifying sea-breeze might sweep unobstructed, but a succession of irregular sand-hills, rising, many of them, to the height of sixty or seventy feet. These sand-hills are so many reverberators of the heat, giving back the deflected rays of the sun with almost as much scorching effect as is possessed by the direct rays themselves. They drink in the heat, by day, from about the beginning of March, when, according to the ancient chronicles, the natives found it warm enough to spread their blankets over the tent of Cortez, to protect him from the sun; and as they radiate it but slowly at night, they continue a gradual accumulation of it, until their temperature in July, and August, frequently exceeds that of the atmosphere, by from  $45^{\circ}$  to  $50^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit! Although the tops of these hills are, for the most part, barren (indeed, they are constantly changing their forms in winter, from the effects of the northers); yet, as the valleys between them serve as so many reservoirs for rain, in the wet season, they have become stagnant pools and fens, with a vegetation of aquatic shrubs and plants. These, decaying from year to year, have deposited along the margins of the pools, a rich mold of vegetable matter, whence have sprung up thickets and jungles. It is easy to perceive what a powerful effect the rays of a vertical sun, acting in these secluded and stagnant valleys, upon the decaying leaves and plants, and other *detritus* of the jungles, the larvæ of insects, etc., must produce, in evolving malaria. Beside which, the water is fre-

quently entirely evaporated from these pools, leaving their reeking and offensive beds much more prolific of disease and death. As if to give all possible effect to them, too, the sea-breeze uniformly dies away about sun-down, and is succeeded by the *terral* or land-breeze, which, passing over them, wafts to the city on its deadly wings, the evolved and evolving malaria. The sea-beach, in front of, and north of the city, on which the receding tides deposit many animal remains, contributes also, in no small degree, to the unhealthiness of the city. If we add to all these, the causes existing within the city itself, we shall not be surprised at the hecatombs of human beings which have been sacrificed here, to this terrible disease, in the one hundred and fifty years, which this modern Golgotha numbers as its age. We have seen that the city is of small extent, and walled entirely around. In this small space, it contains sixteen thousand inhabitants, and the walls are higher than the first stories of the houses; and, of course, shut out, not only from the streets, but from all the dwellers on first floors, the refreshing sea-breezes; thus rendering the heat—increased by reflection from the white walls of the houses—almost insufferable; and preventing the escape of the unpleasant and unhealthy odors, which arise more or less in all thickly inhabited towns. During our occupation of the city, there was less yellow fever than had been known for many years; and it was, no doubt, owing to the very thorough and efficient manner in which Colonel Wilson, the governor, caused it to be cleansed and drained. Indeed, I have no doubt, that if it were Americanized, by the razing of the walls and fortifications, and thus giving free access to the air; and by the superior habits of cleanliness of our people, it would be improved ten-fold, in health. While we are Americanizing it (*par parenthèse*), we must not forget to raze the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, and construct, with its debris, an excellent breakwater between the *Gallega* and the main-land, which would render the “pocket full of holes,” one of the best harbors in Mexico. The *vomito* of Vera Cruz resembles, in all its essential features, that of Havana and New Orleans. It is the same gastro-nervous disease, and is accompanied by the same yellowness of the skin, irritation of the stomach, intense headache, pain in the small of the back, and vomiting. It sometimes prostrates, so powerfully, the nervous

system, as to kill the patient in five or six hours; but its more general course is from two to five days. Women are less subject to it than men, and very young children are rarely attacked by it. It is most to be feared at the commencement and end of the rainy season; and the reason assigned is, that there is more putrefaction of vegetable and animal matter going on at these periods, in consequence of the prevalence of alternate rain and sunshine, than when it is raining constantly; as constant humidity, like constant drowth, retards decomposition. There is, no doubt, a barometric cause also, hitherto unnoticed, which operates more powerfully upon the nervous system, while the atmosphere is undergoing these changes. It is remarkable that the natives of Vera Cruz do not suffer from this disease; and that those who have had it once, need not fear it a second time. But it is not a sufficient exemption for a stranger going to Vera Cruz, to have had it elsewhere. It seems to be modified in each particular place where it prevails, by local causes, more or less variant, and to require a new acclimation in consequence. Thus we see that the eastern coast of Mexico has as powerful a defender in the *vomito*, as in the norther; and it is well known that the inhabitants of the interior plains, at the period of our invasion, relied greatly upon the chances of our being cut off by this disease. On the other hand, General Scott gave it due consideration in the formation of the plan of his campaign, and endeavored to avoid so great a calamity.

## CHAPTER VII.

**MISSION of Commander McKenzie, of the navy, to Cuba—Return of General Santa Anna to Mexico—Great rejoicing in Vera Cruz on the occasion—He immediately put himself at the head of the ultra war party—His march northward, and the battle of Buena Vista—Arrival of General Scott with his troops and transports—He and Commodore Conner reconnoiter the city of Vera Cruz—Landing of the troops—Investment of the city—Summons and reply—Commencement of hostilities—Tattnall's assault on the Castle—The naval battery, and its destructive fire—Walls breached, and city beaten—Mexicans send a flag of truce to General Scott, and propose a surrender.**

IN June or July, 1846, soon after General Taylor had taken possession of Matamoros, and while he was organizing his force and collecting means of transportation for his movement into the interior, Commander McKenzie, of the navy, was dispatched to Cuba, on a secret mission; the object of which has never been officially made known; but from certain circumstances attending and following his visit, we are at no loss to conjecture it. The reader may recollect, that just previous to the breaking out of the war, General Santa Anna was stripped of his power, as president of the Mexican republic, and banished the country. He selected Cuba as the place of his exile, and established himself at a village called the Cerro, about three miles from Havana, where he became quite celebrated for the heavy game of *monte*, which he played, and for the excellent rules and arrangement of his cock-pit! I happened to visit the Cerro about this time, and I heard frequent mention made of the excellence of the ex-president's cocks, and and of the skillful manner in which he heeled and handled them. General Campbell, our consul at Havana, was in the habit of visiting the fallen chieftain—and as on such occasions, the war between their respective countries became naturally a topic of conversation, General Santa Anna, apparently with much frankness, expressed himself, in one or more of these conversations, as

decidedly opposed to the war. Like a sensible man, as he was, he could not but see the folly, as well as hopelessness of such a struggle, on the part of his countrymen, and he took no pains to conceal his sentiments; on the contrary, he seemed desirous to impress General Campbell with the belief that, if he were again at the head of affairs, he would speedily re-establish friendly relations between the two countries. As a matter of course, our government was made acquainted with these dispositions on the part of General Santa Anna. Commander McKenzie, who spoke the Spanish language like a native—and Santa Anna spoke no English—was sent, soon afterward, on his mission to Havana. What transpired we do not know, but Santa Anna, being recalled from his banishment about this time by the Mexican people, with the view of his being restored to power, and assuming the conduct of the war, Commodore Conner was instructed not to molest him, should he desire to return to Mexico. Early in August, while the squadron was lying at anchor under Green Island, keeping watch and ward over the enemy's city and castle of Vera Cruz, the seaman on the look-out, at the mast-head of the *St. Mary's*, then cruising on the blockade, descried the smoke of a steamer. As this was not the regular day for the appearance of any of the English mail steamers—which had been permitted to pass in and out of the beleaguered port without question, the English government pledging itself for their faithful conduct as neutrals—the smoke of a steamer was a novelty, in this now lonely and deserted part of the Mexican gulf. The *St. Mary's*, in due time, placed herself in a position to intercept the stranger, in her approach to the city; and as the latter came up within hailing distance, she ordered her to "heave to," while a boat was being sent on board of her. The boat being in readiness in a few minutes, a lieutenant jumped into her, and with a few strokes of his oars from the sinewy arms of his seamen, placed himself alongside the steamer. The steamer being evidently a merchant vessel, the lieutenant was surprised to find himself received with much ceremony and courtesy, at the gangway. Making his way on deck, and explaining the object of his visit to the captain, he was conducted to the cabin, where he was ushered into the society of a circle of gentlemen, evidently Spaniards or Mexicans, from their

olive complexions, black hair and eyes, and pointed and curled mustachios. It was obvious also, at the first glance, that most, if not all these gentlemen, although dressed in plain or citizens' clothes, were military men, and persons of bearing and distinction. After a moment's pause, the captain, as though he had purposely prepared a surprise for the boarding officer, turned toward him, and making a graceful motion with his right hand, at the same time, in the direction of one of the gentlemen, who, though of the ordinary height and figure, seemed, by his commanding air and manner, to be the chief of the party, said, "allow me to present you, sir, to *General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna!*" The officer started back, at first, in a little surprise, but soon recovering himself, advanced cordially toward the General, and extending his hand, a mutual interchange of civilities took place. In a few moments, Señora Santa Anna (a second wife), a handsome blonde, with deep blue eyes and auburn hair, and still in the bloom of early womanhood, joined the party, and was presented to the officer, who saluted her in turn, with becoming gallantry and respect. General Almonte, late minister to the United States, was also present as one of the General's suite; and speaking our language well, acted as interpreter on the occasion. General Santa Anna having explained briefly who he was—although such explanation was entirely unnecessary—and that he purposed going into Vera Cruz, with the permission of the Commodore, the boarding officer, after sitting as long as courtesy required, and perhaps a little longer than a strict regard to duty permitted, in homage to the lady's charms—a petticoat being quite an unusual sight to us rough blockaders, about this time—withdrew to report "progress," to his commanding officer, and to ask for orders in the novel case which had occurred. The commander, who had been prepared by the commodore for the contingency, forthwith dispatched the boat back again, and directed the officer, at the same time, that he should present his compliments to General Santa Anna, to say to him, on the part of the commodore, that "*he could proceed to Vera Cruz, with his suite, as he desired;*" whereupon, the steamer Arab shot boldly out from under the lee of the blockading vessel, and in an hour or two more, landed her distinguished passenger, "big with the fate" of Mexico, safely in the desired

haven. That night, the roar of cannon, and the bursting of rockets in the air, testified the joy of the fickle Vera Cruzanos at the return of their lost Coriolanus; and it soon transpired, that the wily peace-maker, who had so handsomely duped our cabinet at Washington, had put himself at the head of the ultra war party, and proclaimed, in common with acting-President Salas, whom he hastened to join, "no quarter to the Yankees." Having spent a few days in Vera Cruz, to recover from the fatigues of the voyage, and in feasting, and belligerent speech-making, his excellency put himself *en route* for the capital. His journey thither, resembled a Roman ovation. He was met at all the principal points of the road, by committees of patriotic citizens, and by the military, and was escorted in triumph from city to city, until he reached the capital. Here he was formally installed president of the republic. Having proclaimed the federal constitution (which was one of the conditions of his recall) he immediately set himself to work, to organize a large military force, to be called the "Liberating army." In the month of December, having obtained the requisite permission, he placed himself at the head of this army (under the Mexican constitution, the president cannot command an army *in person*, without the consent of congress) and transferred his head-quarters to *San Luis Potosi*. It was already currently rumored in Mexico, that Vera Cruz was to be attacked by our forces, and that a campaign was to be undertaken, having for its object the capture of the city of Mexico. On the other hand, General Taylor had advanced as far as Saltillo, and threatened the republic from the north. As late as the middle of January, 1847, General Santa Anna was undecided as to which of these invading columns he would oppose; and it is stated on good authority—that of a distinguished Mexican officer, who has ably reviewed the campaign of Angostura (Buena Vista) in a pamphlet entitled "*Rapida ojeada sobre la campaña que hizo el General Santa Anna in el estado de Coahuila, el mes de Febrero proximo pasado*"—that he was finally induced to march against General Taylor, by having received secret intelligence, that there were *two thousand Irishmen, in General Taylor's army, ready to abandon their colors and join him, upon the first gun's being fired!* It is well known that General Arista labored under a similar illusion, before



he was beaten at Palo Alto, and Resaca de la Palma; and it is asserted—by the same Mexican officer, above quoted—that President Paredes was so firmly impressed with this belief, that he looked upon the triumphant defense of Matamoros as certain. At a later period of the war, we ascertained the means by which the Mexican generals had been deluded into such errors. (Some of our Irish, and other foreign soldiers of the regular army—to the number of seventy or eighty—had, at various times, deserted and gone over to the enemy; by whom they had been received kindly, and organized into a separate corps, called the battalion of San Patricio—Saint Patrick. These ignorant and unprincipled men had filled the willing ears of their new allies, with wonderful stories of the want of organization and discipline in the American camp, and of the general disaffection of their countrymen; a slander which was signally refuted afterward by the brave Irish, who proved themselves to be, in every battle that was fought, among our best and most trustworthy troops. In a future page, the reader will have the satisfaction of learning the manner, in which a just retribution overtook nearly every one of these unhappy deserters. As I have before remarked, it is not my purpose to describe the battle of *Buena Vista*, and I only allude to it here, that I may trace the principal events of the war, down to the commencement of the campaign of the “valley of Mexico;” of which alone, it is my purpose to write. The strategic movements of both the generals have been criticised by able military men in Mexico. They contend, that General Santa Anna marched from San Luis Potosi with undue haste, and without having given proper attention to the transport and collection, on the route, of provisions; that when he arrived at Encarnacion, instead of marching, as he did, direct upon Agua Nueva, a distance of fourteen leagues, without water, and putting his troops under the necessity of gaining a victory to quench their thirst, he should have flanked and turned his enemy, by taking, either the road on his left, passing through Santa Elena and la Vaqueria, or that on his right, passing through Hedionda and Jaguey; either of which routes would have afforded him an abundant supply of water, forage for his horses, and more or less provisions for his troops; and that his movement of throwing General Miñon in the rear of General Taylor, with twelve hundred

cavalry, although a good one, was rendered abortive from the insufficiency of the force. He is also found much fault with, for not renewing the battle on the 24th of February—he having still two days' rations in his camp, and being in the momentary expectation of receiving more. With regard to the tactics on the American side, it is asserted, that Agua Nueva is a much stronger defile, and could have been much more easily held, than Angostura (Buena Vista) and that, consequently, General Taylor committed a great error in making the retrograde movement he did, especially in the face of the enemy; such movements having the bad effects of harassing and fatiguing troops on the eve of battle, and demoralizing them more or less. If the facts on which these criticisms are founded, be true—and they can only be judged of, by persons acquainted with the ground—the criticisms would seem to follow very naturally from the premises.

The reason assigned by General Taylor for his movement was, that Agua Nueva could be turned; but so also, could Buena Vista; as it was, in fact, turned by General Miñon's cavalry, and on the evening of the 23d, by the enemy's infantry also; which latter, however, from not having been properly supported, was afterward driven back.

Santa Anna, without having been routed at Buena Vista, was nevertheless repulsed; and failing to force General Taylor's position, failed to accomplish the object of his campaign. On the evening of the 23d of February, it would have been hard to say, which party had been beaten, since both had, at various times, given ground, and both remained on the field of battle, when night separated the combatants. If Santa Anna had been a man of General Taylor's courage and character, and had renewed the battle the next day, there is no telling what might have been the result. But manifesting the want of firmness, in this great battle, which he had before shown on so many occasions, he most unaccountably withdrew from the contest, and scampered off from his army, leaving it to its fate, as a greater captain had done, on a more memorable occasion—the retreat of Moscow.

We may carry our comparison a little farther, between these two celebrated men; they both made haste to return to their respective capitals, to quiet civil dissensions, which had arisen in their absence

On the 26th of February, Señor Gomez Farias, the vice-president, acting as president in the absence of General Santa Anna, having ordered the battalion of "Independence," some of the artillerymen of the regiment of "Mina," and other regular corps, to proceed to Vera Cruz, to strengthen the garrison of that place, in anticipation of our invasion, these troops refused to obey his orders; and in combination with some others, under the leadership of General Matias de la Peña Barragan, raised the standard of revolt. A *pronunciamiento*, and "*plan*" of government were issued, and the insurgents having seized upon some of the fortified points and churches of the city, set the government troops at defiance. There were, at that time, two parties in Mexico, the Polkos, or church party, and the *Puros*, or ultra-federalists (answering to our ultra-democratic party), who were in favor of seizing upon the church property, and confiscating it to the use of the state. The vice-president, Gomez Farias, was the leader of the latter party, and had attacked the church property with so much success, that he had obtained a decree from congress for the sale of a portion of it; but he found it impossible to execute the law, as the officers would neither put up the property for sale as directed, nor would the people bid on it. Minds became very much exasperated on the question, and General Pedraza, undertaking the championship of the church, put himself at the head of the Polkos, and resolved to make an effort to get rid of Farias. The city was divided by the two parties, and kept in constant alarm and confusion, for the space of three weeks—the troops having occasional skirmishes—until the arrival of Santa Anna, on the 18th or 19th of March. This general, after having been beaten, as we have seen, had retired to San Luis Potosi, and thence made his way to the capital. He did not immediately enter the city, but, in imitation of the Roman conquerors, halted in one of the suburbs—Guadalupe Hidalgo—and notified the government of his presence. Three hundred lancers were forthwith dispatched to escort him to the palace; and the congress, which was in session, hastened to appoint a committee to wait on him and administer anew, the presidential oath—he having been considered as temporarily divested of the presidency, while in command of the army. The next day he entered the city in great state, and was escorted, amid salvos of

artillery, to the cathedral ; where a grand *Te Deum* was sung, in honor of the great victory of Angostura (Buena Vista). Grandiloquent dispatches were published, setting forth the gallant exploits of the army, and decorations of honor were distributed to all the principal officers ! These glad tidings, and the strong arm of the successful chief, quieted the discontents of the Polkos, and restored order to the distracted capital. Long before the return of General Santa Anna to the city of Mexico, the news of his victory had reached Vera Cruz ; and we were astonished, one calm afternoon, as we lay quietly at our anchors, not dreaming of misfortune, to hear the heavy guns of the castle thunder forth a salute that shook the very sides of our ships, and reverberated for leagues along the shore, in honor of the event. We could not believe that we had been beaten, however ; and in a few days afterward, a small pilot-boat schooner from New Orleans, ran into the anchorage, and brought us, in a New Orleans paper, the glorious news of the triumph of our arms.

While these events were progressing, the navy was patiently and perseveringly performing its less glorious, but not less toilsome duties. Commodore Conner, by means of a system of intelligence, which he had recently established with the blockaded city, kept the government accurately informed of all the movements of the enemy ; of the discussions of his congress ; of the changes in his ministry ; of the levy and equipment of troops, etc.

On the 1st of January, 1847, General Scott arrived at the Brazos, and began to collect his troops for the invasion. He had orders to withdraw from General Taylor's column, four thousand regulars ; and the ten new regiments, which had been recently voted by congress, were to be raised and sent forward to him with all dispatch. Toward the middle of February, having informed Commodore Conner by letter, that he had directed his transports to rendezvous at the small island of Lobos, about 120 miles N. W. of Vera Cruz, the commodore dispatched the sloop-of-war, *St. Mary's*, Commander Saunders, to this point, to show the various transports, as they should arrive, the way into a secure anchorage, and when they were all assembled, to conduct them to Anton Lizardo. In the meantime, other ships, laden with surf-boats for the landing of troops, provisions, artillery, means of transporta-

tion, etc., began to arrive daily, direct from New York and other ports. Officers were detailed to pilot these vessels in, in like manner, regulate their anchoring, concert signals with them, etc. The surf-boats were launched and moored near us, fitted with oars, cables and anchors, and other preliminary arrangements were made to forward the contemplated descent, immediately upon the arrival of the general-in-chief. Our hitherto quiet head-quarters, in which we had stagnated all winter, became daily more animated, until Anton Lizardo was crowded with a magnificent fleet of steamers and sail-vessels; all bearing at their gaff-ends the proud flag of our republic, and giving the lookers-on, from the Mexican coast, presage of coming events—if presage had been wanted. General Scott arrived on the 6th of March, in the steamship *Massachusetts*. On the 7th, Commodore Conner, inviting him, with his staff, to accompany him in the steamer *Perita*, they made, together, a reconnoissance of the city and castle, and coasts adjacent; the enemy giving them a shot or two, in token of defiance. Two days afterward, such was the state of forwardness in which General Scott found things, the descent took place. As a matter of course, Commodore Conner had, for some time previous, given his attention to the selection of a proper place for landing. There were several points where this might be effected; but he wisely gave the preference to the smooth sand beach, abreast of the island of Sacrificios; both because this was nearer the city, and because it was partially protected against the northers. In his letters to the government, he had recommended this place; and General Scott, on his first reconnoissance, concurred in his views.

The anchorage at Sacrificios being small, it would have been impossible to crowd all the transports that were loaded with troops, into it, at one time; and therefore, it was resolved, on consultation between the two chiefs, to throw most of the troops on board the larger ships of war, and make them the transports, *pro hac vice*. All preliminary arrangements having been made, this was done on the morning of the 9th; and between eleven and twelve o'clock, the fleet—Commodore Conner leading, in the flag-ship *Raritan* (Captain Forrest), whose decks, like those of the other ships, were crowded with troops, and General Scott follow-

ing at a short distance, in the steamer *Massachusetts*—got under-way, in gallant style, and filed, one by one, out of the narrow pass leading from the anchorage. If we had had the choice of weather, we could not have selected a more propitious day. The sun shot forth his brilliant rays in a cloudless sky, and a gentle breeze from the south-east, which was favorable, and just sufficient for our purposes, rippled, without roughening, the sea. We were two hours in passing from Anton Lizardo to Sacrificios—two hours of such eager excitement as those only can know who have taken part in such an expedition. Every step of our progress was fraught with the associations of three hundred years; and the mind, as it recognized object after object, famous in the history of the conquest, became tintured with the romance of that remote period, and emulous of the deeds which had characterized its actors. How curious and philosophical would have been the spectacle, had Cortez been able, from the tops of the sand-hills, on which he first landed, and which same sand-hills we were now about to crown with our banners, to look down upon our gallant fleet, interspersed with that most wonderful and most potent of all modern machines, the steam-ship, and arrayed in the stars and stripes of an unknown flag! Time, with his scythe and hour-glass, had brought another and a newer race, to sweep away the moldered and moldering institutions of a worn-out people, and replace them with a fresher and more vigorous civilization. The descendant of the Dane and the Saxon, with "progress" inscribed on his helmet, had come to supplant the never-changing Visigoth in his halls, and to claim that superiority for his lineage, which an all-wise Providence has so indelibly stamped upon it. As the ships approached their allotted anchoring ground, they came to, although still much crowded, notwithstanding their reduction of numbers, in the most harmonious and exact order, each one dropping her anchor and swinging into her appropriate place, without the least confusion, and with the most admirable precision. Indeed, so thoroughly and ably had Commodore Conner organized the whole movement; from the transfer of the troops from the vessels in which they had arrived, to the ships of war; to the placing them with haversack and musket on the enemy's beach, that it was next to impossible that anything could go wrong. The surf-boats, 67

in number, and each one manned by experienced seamen of the navy, were hauled alongside of the ships; the soldiers, with their arms and accoutrements, were passed into them; and as each boat received her complement, she shoved off, and laid on her oars, at a little distance, until the others should be ready. The post of honor on this memorable occasion, was given to Brevet Brigadier-General Worth, who had so recently distinguished himself before Monterey—it being decided by the general-in-chief, that his division—the 1st division of regulars, which afterward became so celebrated in the valley of Mexico—should be the first to flout our flag in the enemy's face. Accordingly, when all was ready, the general, whose fine military person and bearing, had already won the hearts of such of the officers of the navy, as had come in contact with him, descended into one of the man-of-war's boats, prepared for him, and placing himself at the head of his troops, moved, in a semicircle, toward the shore. Commodore Conner had previously directed the two steamers, Spitfire, Commander Tattnall, and Vixen, Commander Sands, with five gun-schooners, to anchor in line, abreast of the beach, to cover the landing, in case any opposition should be made. This part of the movement had already been handsomely executed. Nothing could exceed the beauty of this spectacle, as viewed from the poop of the flagship. It was just before sunset, an hour at which all the beauties of the Mexican coast are wont to stand out in bold and beautiful relief. The day had continued as clear as it had begun, and the sea-breeze, as it died gradually away, had left behind it a glazed and unruffled sea. The magnificent mountain of Orizaba, with its snow-clad summit, which had been hid from view most of the day, suddenly revealed itself, with startling distinctness and grandeur; the distant Cofre de Perote loomed up, also, in blue and mystic beauty, and the bold and rugged outline of the coast, seemed more bold and rugged still, from the refracting power of the atmosphere.

The walls of the town and castle, the domes of the churches, and the rigging and mast-heads of the foreign men-of-war, anchored at Sacrificios, all filled with curious and eager spectators, completed a scene which made a lively impression upon the minds of all beholders. The boats reaching the shore, in fine style, the

troops debarked in good order ; and in a few minutes afterward a detachment, which had wound its way up one of the sand-hills, unfurled the American flag, and waving it proudly over their heads, planted it in the land of Cortez. As if by common consent, a shout, such as seamen only can give, arose at this moment from the decks of all the ships-of-war present, which was joined in, and prolonged, by such portions of the army as had not yet landed. The debarkation now went briskly forward, and before ten o'clock, P. M., the whole force present, consisting of about twelve thousand men, was safely landed, without the occurrence of a single mistake or accident ; an event unparalleled in the history of similar operations, and of which any naval commander might well be proud. The officers of the navy, although cut off by the nature of the war, from any participation in its glories, none the less willingly discharged their duties to the government, and aided their more fortunate brethren of the army, to gather fresh laurels for their common country.

A few days after this event, Commodore Conner was relieved from his command by Commodore Perry, and returned to the United States, followed by the regrets and respect of the brave officers and men, who had been so long under his orders. He had commanded the squadron four years ; a year longer than the allotted period ; and from the harassing nature of the service in which he had been employed, and the effects of an unhealthy climate, on a constitution naturally weak, he had become almost a confirmed invalid. Like the self-sacrificing Collingwood, however, he never complained or relaxed a moment in his attention to his public duties, and would, had it been necessary, have cheerfully surrendered his life at his post. Commodore Perry was an able and worthy successor, and blessed with more vigor of constitution ; a matter of no small consideration, in a predatory war, on an unhealthy coast. He hoisted his flag on board the steamer Mississippi, and continued the zealous co-operation with General Scott, which Commodore Conner had commenced.

On the night of the landing, our troops, having thrown forward proper advanced guards, bivouacked on the sands, without tents, or other shelter than that afforded by their blankets, beneath the open sky. The next morning, they drove in the enemy's pickets,



and began to extend the line of investment around the city. This was a most difficult and laborious work to perform, as it was necessary to transport almost everything by hand, for the want of proper draught animals, but few of which had as yet arrived. The ground to be occupied, too, was remarkably difficult, being composed of arid sand-hills, whose slopes were covered with a stunted growth of the thorny mimosa, prickly pear, and other plants, forming impassable chapparals, which it was frequently necessary to cut through with the axe. As before remarked, when speaking of the topography of Vera Cruz, there were frequent pools of water, too, between these hills, which it was necessary either to traverse, or make lengthy detours to avoid. But the officers and men were animated by the utmost enthusiasm, and betaking themselves manfully to their tasks, they drew their line around the city on the evening of the third day; the line being five miles in extent. Some skirmishing with parties of the enemy's cavalry ensued, while these operations were going forward, but nothing of moment occurred. General Worth occupied, with his division, a position in this line immediately S. E. of the city, establishing his head-quarters very near the point where he first landed. This was to be the front of attack. General Scott also established his head-quarters in this vicinity, a few hundred yards south of those of General Worth. General Twiggs, with the second division of regulars, was directed to take up his position at Vergara, north of the city; and General Patterson, commanding the division of volunteers, occupied that portion of the line west of the city, and intermediate between these two extremes. He had under his orders Brigadier-Generals Quitman, Pillow, and Shields. Before these arrangements were completed, a norther set in, and greatly incommoded the troops; sweeping the frail foundation of sand from beneath their feet, as they traversed the arid and ever-shifting desert, and almost stifling them in their progress. The blow suspended all communication with the shipping; and no progress could be made in landing necessary provisions and stores, until the 13th, when, the gale having abated, the officers and seamen of the navy, with their accustomed energy and zeal, threw rapidly on shore such articles as were most urgently required, and began landing the mortars and artillery. A number of cavalry

and draught horses having arrived, they were also landed, to the great relief of the more distant parts of the line. By dint of great exertions, all the necessary intrenching tools, carts, pack-saddles, etc., and twelve or fourteen mortars, with a greater or less supply of shells, were landed, by the 17th. During all this time, there had been a random fire kept up, by the city batteries, and the castle, and a number of shells had been thrown into the lines, but with little effect; as, up to this period, there had only been three men killed, and four or five wounded. Among the former was Captain Alburtis, of the 2d Infantry—a gallant and accomplished officer, who fell much regretted by his companions in arms; and among the latter, Lieutenant-Colonel Dickenson, of South Carolina, who afterward fell gloriously in the valley of Mexico. On the night of the 18th, the trenches were opened, and taken possession of, by the troops. On the 22d, the engineers and ordnance officers, having succeeded in placing in battery seven mortars, and preparations being well advanced for receiving others, General Scott formally summoned the city to surrender. To his summons a polite reply was returned, by General Morales, the commandant of both city and castle, to the effect that he meant to defend himself to the last extremity. Upon the return of the flag, all communication with the town, by the neutral men-of-war (which up to this time had been unrestricted), was prohibited by Commodore Perry; and General Scott, at a quarter past four, in the afternoon, ordered the mortar batteries to open upon the city; which was done with much spirit and effect. After a few rounds, the officers got the exact range of their shells, and threw them with wonderful precision into those parts of the city, which they selected as their targets. These batteries were numbered 1, 2, and 3. About six o'clock, on the same afternoon, Captain Vinton, of 3d Artillery, while in command of battery No. 3, was killed. This gentleman, like Captain Alburtis, was beloved and respected by the army, and his loss was severely felt.

As soon as Commodore Perry had observed that the mortars had opened, he directed Commander Tattnall, in the Spitfire; with the Vixen, Commander Sands; and gun-schooners Bonita, Lieutenant Benham; Reefer, Lieutenant Sterrett; Petrel, Lieutenant Shaw; Falcon, Lieutenant Glasson; and Tampico, Lieutenant

Griffin, to take up a position within effective range of the city, and pour in their fire, also. This movement was handsomely executed ; the little fleet anchoring in line, in a small bend formed by Point Hornos, about a mile from the city walls, and opening a well-directed and destructive fire. These vessels, though small, were all heavily armed with thirty-two-pounders, and eight-inch Paixhan guns ; and, consequently, at the distance of a mile, which was the nearest they could approach, without bringing themselves within point-blank range of two hundred pieces of artillery, on the castle and city walls, their fire was very effective. The enemy, who had been firing at intervals only, since the landing, and throwing an occasional shell from city and castle, when he perceived that the attack had commenced in earnest, opened upon us with all his batteries, that would bear upon the attacking part of the line, and the fleet, and began to throw back at us, at least, shell for shell. The castle was armed with some very heavy mortars, and now and then threw a shell of immense size, and destructive force. As these mammoth engines of war would bury themselves in the sand, and explode with the detonation of a thunder-bolt, the ground would be shaken for yards around, as though there had been a miniature earthquake. It was an awful, as well as grand and beautiful, spectacle, to behold this first engagement of the two opposing armies, with its deafening roar of artillery, clouds of wreathing smoke, crashing of shot and shells, and flashes of lurid lightning, as the heavy pieces belched forth their destructive missiles of death. But mere word-painting is inadequate to give a correct idea of a battle-scene. At dark, both parties ceased the fire of their artillery, and the "mosquito" fleet, as Tattnall's small vessels were appropriately called, drew off for the night. The mortars, on both sides, continued to illumine the darkness by the rapid and beautiful passage of their shells through the air ; and the terrific explosions of these occasionally broke in upon our slumbers, on board the fleet, to remind us that the work of destruction was going bravely on. At day-light on the 23d, Tattnall, by the order of Commodore Perry, advanced boldly to attack the castle ; not with the expectation of making any serious impression upon it, but to divert its fire, for the moment, from the land-forces. He took up his position, within about eight hundred

yards, and to the astonishment and admiration of both sailors and soldiers, maintained it for half an hour and more, until he was recalled by signal, retiring without having sustained any serious loss.

A norther soon afterward sprung up, and continued to blow furiously through the day, cutting off again, all intercourse between the shipping and the shore, and thus seriously retarding the progress of the siege. The fire of the mortars was slackened for the want of shells (which could not be landed), there being but one shell thrown in every five minutes. The further inconvenience was felt of having the trenches and mortar batteries filled up with sand, almost as fast as it could be removed. Three more mortars, which had been previously landed, were placed in battery to-day, and the engineers, and sappers, and miners were employed in constructing two batteries for siege pieces. General Scott finding that his battering train, which was a very heavy and well appointed one, did not arrive in time, was compelled to ask for assistance from Commodore Perry. The navy had, from the first, hoped that it would be allowed to participate in the operations on shore, and had volunteered for this purpose; but it was generally understood in the squadron, that its services had been declined; and that there was a manifest desire on the part of the general-in-chief, to confine it, as much as possible, to the ships, and to the sea-beach, where the *materiel* of the army was being landed. It may be that this was an unjust suspicion, but it being a part of the *res gesta* of the siege, I deem it proper to mention it. It was seen that the shells were having but little effect, in quarters where it was most desirable to produce it. The houses were shattered, women and children were killed (a shell falling through the dome of the church of Santo Domingo, killed a number of wounded, who had been carried thither by the surgeons to have their wounds dressed; and upon the remainder of them being removed to the church of San Francisco, occupied as a hospital, by a strange accident, another shell fell through the roof of this building also, and, with a terrible explosion, killed nineteen persons, many of them women and children), and much destitution and misery were produced among the inhabitants; but the fortifications, and their garrisons, which were better protected, were

scarcely at all injured, owing to the impossibility of shelling isolated points, of small extent, with precision. General Scott's heaviest battering guns were twenty-four-pounders, entirely too light for breaching purposes; it was not known how long the enemy might hold out, unless the city could be carried by assault; the season of the *vomito* was approaching, and there was no alternative, but to have recourse to the navy for heavier metal, wherewith to breach the walls. General Scott, accordingly, in a conversation with Commodore Perry, made known to this officer his wants, and required of him a portion of his guns. The commodore's courteous and gallant reply, couched in Lacedæmonian brevity, was, "Certainly, General, but I must fight them." And he did fight them, as the reader will see. The officers and seamen of the navy, who had hitherto borne the brunt of all the labor in landing the arms and other munitions belonging to the army, without a murmur, and had even extorted commendations from the general-in-chief, himself, for the energy with which they had addressed themselves to this more ignoble task, received with delight the intelligence that they were, at last, to participate in the *honors* of the siege.

Six heavy pieces of ordnance were landed, and about two hundred seamen and volunteers being attached to each piece, with incredible toil and perseverance, they dragged them, by main strength, a distance of three miles, to the point where they were to be put in battery; most of the way, through loose sand, knee deep, and fording, in their passage, a lagoon two feet deep and seventy yards wide. With the able assistance of the engineers, and sappers and miners, who were equally unremitting and zealous in their labors, the officers were enabled to place their pieces in battery, during the night of the 23d. The mask of this battery, which was within seven hundred yards of the city walls, had been well preserved, and the engineers and seamen had worked without being observed or molested by the enemy. The battery was situated about due south of the center of the city, in General Patterson's portion of the line of investment, and consequently under his orders. But with a tact and delicacy highly commendable, he did not make us aware, at any one time during the operations, that he was our commanding officer. The six

guns, of which the battery was composed, were of the following description and weight of metal; the heaviest, perhaps, that had ever before been mounted in siege:

Three 68-pounder shell-guns, weighing 63 cwt. each.

Three 32-pounder solid-shot guns, of the same weight.

On the same evening on which this battery was completed, Colonel Bankhead, the chief of artillery, had caused to be placed in battery, three twenty-four-pounders; to this battery, there were subsequently added another twenty-four-pounder, and two eight-inch howitzers. The mortar batteries having been numbered 1, 2, and 3, as before remarked, the twenty-four-pounder battery was numbered 4, and the navy battery numbered 5. These were all the batteries that were erected during the siege of Vera Cruz, viz: By the army, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, containing ten mortars, two howitzers, and four twenty-four-pounders; and by the navy, No. 5, containing six sixty-eight and thirty-two-pounder shell and solid-shot guns. The norther, which, as we have remarked, had been blowing all day, lulled at night, and enabled Commodore Perry to make suitable preparations for taking possession of, and opening his heavy battery on, the morrow. Up to this time, we had been throwing shells, regularly, into the town for two days, without producing other effects than such as I have described, of destroying a beautiful city, and killing the inoffensive, because unarmed, portion of the population. The true object of a siege is to reduce the *armed* portion of the population to submission, and thus insure the surrender of the place: humanity, in the present century, revolts at the destruction of private property, and the unnecessary effusion of blood. Both of these results necessarily follow the institution and active prosecution of a siege, it is true; but then, it is our duty to diminish them as much as possible. Instead of throwing shells from a safe distance into a fortified city, and thus making war upon the private domicile of the citizen, killing his wife and children, and destroying his property, we should erect batteries against its fortified points, and assail its military defenders; breaching the walls, and carrying the city by the bayonet, if necessary, in order, that if blood flow, it may flow in the right quarter. There is no cause to fear, that the disgraceful scenes which have so often and so

recently attended the storming of cities in Europe, will ever be re-enacted by our humane and enlightened soldiery, on this continent. The storming of the rich and populous capital of Mexico, is a guarantee that they will not be.

If Vera Cruz had been well supplied with provisions, and garrisoned by resolute men, it might have held out for six months, against all the shells that we could have thrown into it: it was, therefore, both a judicious and a humane move, on the part of General Scott, to call in the navy to his aid, to breach the walls for him, in order that he might carry the place by assault; as it was his intention to do, had the enemy held out twenty-four hours longer. Early on the morning of the 24th, Capt. Aulick—the second in command of the squadron—with a party of officers and seamen, took possession of battery No. 5; and clearing away the masking of brush, etc., by which it had been hid from the enemy, opened a rapid and heavy fire from the whole of his six pieces. The enemy was astonished at the vigor and power of this new assailant. Hitherto, the walls and forts had not been touched, but now our heavy solid-shot, thrown from thirty-two-pounders, at the short distance of seven hundred yards, came plunging, at the first blow, through the walls (which had been constructed of the soft and brittle coral rock, and were a good deal dilapidated by age, and the elements), killing his artillerists, and dismounting his guns. While the thirty-two-pounders were doing this execution, the hollow-shot guns, firing with nearly the same accuracy, exploded their terrible missiles, precisely where the officers chose to put them—not through the domes of churches and hospitals, but in the casemates and barracks of the soldiers. The Mexicans, becoming thus aware that Commodore Perry was “fighting his guns,” concentrated upon the gallant little battery, the fire of three forts, Santiago, and two others farther west; one of the latter being precisely in our front. Captain Aulick maintained his fire until four o’clock, P. M., when his ammunition being exhausted, and his defenses a good deal injured, he ceased for the night. In this, our first day’s work, we had four men killed, and six wounded; Lieutenant Baldwin being among the latter. The mortars continued to throw their shells as usual, but somewhat more languidly, on account of a short supply

of ammunition, which the norther of the previous day had prevented us from landing.

The army battery of twenty-four-pounders (No. 4), had not yet been able to open—the arrangements of the battery not being complete. Commodore Perry having directed that the officers and seamen, serving at the naval battery, should be relieved every evening at sunset, in order that as many of them as possible, might have a chance at “the glories,” Captain Aulick and his party were relieved by Captain Mayo, of the flag-ship *Mississippi*, with a fresh detail of officers and men.

Colonel P. F. Smith, of the Rifles, cantoned at Vergara, had a clever little affair to-day, near the Puente del Medio—a bridge across a small stream that empties into the river Antigua—with between two and three hundred of the enemy. With about the same force, he drove them handsomely from their position, and killed three or four of their men.

Toward evening, General Scott received a memorial from the consuls of Great Britain, France, Spain, and Prussia—all the consuls then within the city of Vera Cruz—asking him to grant a truce, to enable the neutral residents, and Mexican women and children to withdraw from the scene of havoc around them. As according to the rules of civilized warfare in Christian countries, one of the legitimate means of reducing an enemy to terms, is to starve his women and children; we did not, of course, accede to this proposition; General Scott replying: 1st that he had admonished them (the consuls), as early as the 13th, of the dangers that were impending; 2dly, that he had left open to them a free communication with the ships of war of their respective nations, until the 22d; and 3dly, that on this latter day, in his summons to General Morales to surrender the city, “he had fully considered the impending hardships and distresses of the place, including those of the women and children.” Wherefore the memorialists “took nothing” by their memorial, and the work of the siege went forward.

The night of the 24th was a beautiful star-light night—as well as I remember, there was no moon—and the relief party, for the navy battery, reached its station—after running the gauntlet of the enemy’s fire, on a portion of the route—a little before sunset.



We bivouacked our men in a clump of bushes on the southern, or off-slope, of the sand-hill, on the brow of which the battery was placed; cooked an excellent supper, with plenty of hot coffee; smoked a cigar, and went to bed; that is to say, each one of us made a hole in the sand, to conform to the angularity of his figure, and pulled a blanket over his head. Meanwhile the engineers, with relief working parties, were busy with the repair of our defenses, which had been rendered almost untenable, and a detachment of volunteers kept guard while we slept. Although our position sheltered us from the direct fire of the enemy, which indeed had ceased since night set in, yet an occasional shell, thrown at random in our direction, exploded in fearful proximity to us. The novelty of my position, and the excitement of the scene around me—the engineers working away at our sand-bags, like so many specters, by the starlight, the sentinel, at a little distance, pacing his solitary round, and the sailors collected in small groups, discoursing, *sotto voce*, but not so *sotto* either, but that every now and then, a “d——n my eyes” could be heard—prevented me from sleeping. Perhaps, after all, a little sensation of nervousness, occasioned by the thought of being set up, on the morrow, to be shot at by three batteries, had more to do with my wakefulness, than at the time I was willing to confess to myself. In the early part of the night, the walls of the city abreast of us, and on our right, were brilliantly illuminated by the burning of some sheds and other buildings in the suburbs; no doubt, fired by the Mexicans themselves, to unmask new pieces, which they were placing in position, to oppose us. About midnight, I wandered to a small eminence, in the neighborhood of our battery, to look forth upon the scene. It was perfectly calm. The fleet at Sacrificios was just visible through the gloom, and was sleeping quietly at its anchors, without other sign of life, than a solitary light burning at the gaff-end of the commodore. The castle of San Juan de Ulloa, magnified out of all proportion by the uncertain starlight, and looking ten times more somber and defiant than ever, appeared to enjoy equal repose. Even the sea seemed to have gone to sleep, after the turmoil of the recent norther, as the only sound that reached the ear, from that direction, was a faint, very faint murmur, hoarse and plaintive, as the lazy swell, with scarcely

energy enough to break, stranded itself on the beach. The cricket and the catydid, and myriads of other insects—the south is the land of insects—chirruped in a sort of inharmonious melody, reminding one of his far-off home and of fireside scenes. But if nature was thus inclined to repose, man was not, for Death still held his carnival within the walls of the beleaguered city. Those horrid mortars of ours were in “awful activity.” The demons incarnate, all begrimed with powder and smoke, who served them at this midnight hour, having received a fresh supply of shells and ammunition, since the lull of the norther, seemed to redouble their energies, to make up for their lazy day’s work of yesterday. They gave the doomed city no respite, not even for a single moment, as the air was never without its tenant, winging its way on its errand of death. I sat and watched these missiles for an hour and more, and I shall never forget the awful scream, apparently proceeding from several female voices, which came ringing on the night air, as one of those terrible engines of destruction exploded—carrying death and dismay, no doubt, to some family circle. No sight could have been more solemn and impressive—the imagination dwelling all the while on the awful tragedy which was being enacted—than the flight of those missiles through the air. The night was just dark enough to admit of their burning fuses being seen, as they traced those beautiful parabolas, peculiar to this kind of projectile. And then, the awful precision with which they would explode, called forth my constant admiration. They seemed to be hid but a single second or less, behind the dark curtain of the city walls, before the terrible explosion—reverberated and magnified, as it passed through the streets, by the walls of the houses—would almost stun the ear—I was only seven hundred yards off, and the humidity of the atmosphere was highly favorable to the passage of sound. Occasionally, several would be in the air at the same time—I counted as high as five on one occasion—chasing each other like playful meteors, and exploding in quick succession like a *feu de joie*. We were astir, the next morning, at early daylight—our boatswain’s mate having aroused all hands, in man-of-war fashion, with a shrill note from his “call”—silver whistle—and a voice resembling the growl of a grizzly bear. By sunrise, we were at our work; the seamen hand-

ling their long 32s and 68s like toys, and the officers delivering their fire in quick succession, and in the right place. The enemy was not long in replying to us. The same three batteries that had handled Captain Aulick so roughly yesterday, concentrated upon us again to-day, apparently with renewed energy. In addition to this, the castle, which by this time had discovered the true point of attack, began to throw a monster shell at us, at intervals. We had constant occasion to admire the spirit and accuracy, with which the Mexican artillerists handled their pieces. Their shot, which were much lighter than ours, came whistling just over our heads, or buried themselves in the sand-bags, at the muzzles of our guns, with a spiteful and sullen sound, as if in a rage of disappointment at not being able to reach us. Now and then, one would come whizzing through the embrasures, taking off some poor fellow's head, or having spent itself on the parapet outside, come hopping in lightly on the platform, where we were working the guns. We collected several of these, and sent them back again—two at a time—to the enemy, with our compliments. At heavy artillery exercise, the Mexicans are perhaps our equals—their practice is very constant—but they fall far short of us, in the management of light pieces in the field. It so happened that the two navies were opposed to each other, on this occasion; the little battery, immediately in front of us, and the hottest and most efficient of the three, being commanded by Lieutenant Holsinger, an intelligent young German, who had been several years in the Mexican service. We, of the Raritan—Captain Forrest being represented by a thirty-two—paid our particular respects to this gentleman. Our piece fired with the accuracy of a rifle, as did all the solid-shot guns, and we were consequently enabled to pitch our heavy metal “right into him.” We shot away his colors twice, which the gallant fellow as often replaced, though we must have been riddling his slight redoubt, and slaying his seamen at every discharge. About seven o'clock, in the day, the army battery, No. 4—twenty-four-pounders—opened its fire, and rendered us friendly assistance, by diverting the attention of Fort Santiago—though this fort being more distant than the other two, had done us but little damage. The mortars continuing, too, to throw their shells with spirit, the whole constituted

that "awful activity" described by the general-in-chief, in his dispatch.

About this time, an accident occurred, which had well-nigh put an end to our breaching operations, in the navy battery. The castle, which, as I have remarked, had been shelling us at intervals, threw one of its thirteen inch bombs, with such precision that it lighted on the sand, not more than five paces in the rear of one of the guns. At about this distance in the rear of each piece, we had stationed a quarter-gunner, with a small copper tank, capable of holding eight or ten charges of powder—each charge weighing about ten pounds. The shell falling near one of these petty officers, he turned, upon hearing a noise behind him—he had not seen the shell fall—and finding a monstrous cannon ball there, as he thought, mechanically put his hand upon it. Finding it hot, it at once occurred to him what it was. It was too late to run, and in the consternation of the moment, like a drowning man who will grasp at a straw, he doubled himself up in a heap, and attempted to burrow himself, head foremost, in the sand, like an ostrich. All this occurred in the space of a second, and in a moment more, the shell exploded, with the noise of a thousand pieces of artillery, shaking the battery like an earthquake, and covering the officers and seamen with clouds of dust and sand. Our fire was suspended for a moment, and when the smoke had cleared off sufficiently to enable us to distinguish objects, every officer looked around him in breathless anxiety, expecting to behold the blackened corpses, and mutilated limbs of half his comrades at least. Strange to say, not a soul was hurt. Lieutenant Frailey had his hat badly wounded by a fragment of the shell, which carried away one-half of its rim. Even the quarter-gunner, who, on such short notice found it impossible to get down into the sand, and who beside had had his copper tank blown up, with forty or fifty pounds of powder in it, had escaped unhurt—the fragments fortunately rising into the air, instead of spreading laterally. We continued our fire until two o'clock, P. M., when the enemy's batteries all ceased, except now and then a random shot. The city was beaten; and on the same afternoon, we had the satisfaction of seeing a white flag pass into General Scott's camp—Washington. The navy battery, in the last two

days, had thrown one thousand paixhan shells, and eight hundred round shot into the enemy's walls and forts. Colonel Bankhead, the chief of ordnance, estimated the whole number of shot and shells, thrown by the army, at two thousand five hundred. In the engagement just ended, we had lost five men killed—Midshipman Shubrick being of the number. This officer, while fighting his gun, had his throat cut with a twelve-pound shot, and expired instantly. As they were taking his corpse to the rear, I feared it was our gallant captain, who had exposed himself, as his friends thought, very unnecessarily, during the heat of the contest.

The enemy no longer molesting us, we collected in groups, on the tops of our sand-bags, to examine the damage we had done. By the aid of our glasses, we could see that both the forts abreast of us, and with which we had had such hot work, were completely demolished; the guns dismounted, and the walls knocked into a heap of ruins; and that our efforts at breaching the city walls had been successful beyond our expectations. These no longer presented any obstacle to an assaulting army; as at the points at which we had directed our aim, scarce one stone remained upon another.—We were pained to observe, too, that despite ourselves, we had knocked down many of the habitations of the poorer class of people, which abounded in this quarter. The city, which had been deprecating the use of shells, and clamoring for an assault, now that an assault had become practicable, and was on the point of being offered to it, suddenly lost courage, and began to make preparations for surrender. General Morales, finding that the crisis had arrived, and being unwilling to surrender himself a prisoner on parole, and thus, in all probability, cut himself off from all further opportunity of taking part in the war, made his escape—with the commandant of militia—on the night of the 25th, in a small boat; devolving the command on General Landero, with whom Commodore Conner had had much official intercourse during the blockade, and whom we always found a courteous and clever gentleman.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SIZES of Vera Cruz continued—Articles of capitulation signed—Surrender of the city—The Mexican army marches out, and lays down its arms—General Scott's dispatch announcing the result—General Quitman marches to the attack of Alvarado—Is anticipated by Lieutenant Hunter—Subsequent trial of this officer for disobedience of orders—New aspect of Vera Cruz under American rule—Capture of Tuspan—Exploration of the river of this name—Author ordered into the interior of Mexico, on a special mission—Departure from Vera Cruz—Incidents of the road—The alcalde of Santa Fe—Valley of San Juan, and encounter of General Pillow.

NOTHING satisfactory having been as yet settled, with regard to the surrender, a moderate fire was kept up by Colonel Bankhead, from his mortars, during the night, and until eight o'clock on the morning of the 26th, when another flag appearing with definite propositions, General Scott ordered the firing to cease from all the batteries. Thus was achieved, what has been called, the "bloodless victory" of Vera Cruz;\* bloodless enough, so far as we were concerned, but an awful tragedy to the enemy. The army lost, in killed, only ten persons, including those who died of their wounds; the navy lost, in its battery, nine persons killed, including one who died of his wounds, making a total of nineteen; while the enemy estimated his loss at a thousand souls, in killed and wounded—most of them killed, as is always the case in artillery combats! The possession of Vera Cruz, with its castle and

---

\* But for the prompt surrender of the city, it would have been assaulted—probably the day after the walls were breached by the naval battery. General Scott and Commodore Perry had organized a storming party, to consist of three columns, composed, respectively, of the sailors and marines of the squadron, the regulars, and the volunteers. To Commodore Perry had been assigned the task of carrying the sea-front of the city, and the gallant commodore had resolved to head his storming column, in person. He had also made arrangements for storming the water-battery of the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, during the siege, and spiking its guns, and only waited for the waning of the moon to put his plan in execution; but the unexpected surrender of the city prevented him.

harbor was of immense importance to us. It turned over a new page in the history of the war, and opened to us the hitherto sealed way to the rich and populous plains of Anahuac; the seat of the enemy's civilization and power. Our government, having retraced its former injudicious steps, now began to see some prospect of concluding a war, of which our people had already begun to grow tired, and which had been attended with unusual expense, owing to the unprepared state in which it had found us—as wars always find, and perhaps should find republics, so far as extensive military armaments are concerned. With such a base of operations, of easy protection, affording us ample shelter for our troops, and spacious storehouses for our supplies, and, by the aid of steam, brought within three or four days of New Orleans, it would be an easy matter for us to take possession of the enemy's capital—a feat, which, up to this time, had been considered, by many persons, of difficult, if not doubtful, achievement. The commissioners appointed to negotiate the capitulation were, on our part, Brevet Major-General Worth—who had received, during the progress of the siege, the news of his promotion to this rank, awarded to him by a generous nation, in admiration of his brilliant achievements before Monterey—Brigadier-General Pillow, and Colonel Totten, chief of engineers, to whom was afterward added, on demand of Commodore Perry, Captain Aulick, of the navy; and on the part of the enemy, Colonel Villanueva, Lieutenant-Colonel of engineers Robles, and Colonel Herrera. There were not many points to be discussed; the city had been thoroughly beaten, and the surrender must necessarily be unconditional, except so far as General Scott might mitigate its terms, to save the honor of a foe, who had made a spirited and obstinate defense.—Here follows General Scott's dispatch, announcing the result:

“HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

“*Vera Cruz, March 29, 1847.*

“SIR:—The flag of the United States of America floats triumphantly over the walls of this city and the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa.

“Our troops have garrisoned both since ten o'clock. It is

now noon. Brigadier-General Worth is in command of both places.

"Articles of capitulation were signed and exchanged, at a late hour, night before the last. I inclose a copy of the document.

"I have heretofore reported the principal incidents of the siege up to the 25th instant. Nothing of striking interest occurred until early in the morning of the next day, when I received overtures from General Landero, on whom General Morales had devolved the principal command. A terrible storm of wind and sand made it difficult to communicate with the city, and impossible to refer to Commodore Perry. I was obliged to entertain the proposition alone, or to continue the fire upon a place that had shown a disposition to surrender; for the loss of a day, or perhaps several, could not be permitted. The accompanying papers will show the proceedings and results.

"Yesterday, after the norther had abated, and the commissioners appointed by me early the morning before, had again met those appointed by General Landero, Commodore Perry sent ashore his second in command, Captain Aulick, as a commissioner on the part of the navy. Although not included in my specific arrangement made with the Mexican Commander, I did not hesitate, with proper courtesy, to desire that Captain Aulick might be duly introduced and allowed to participate in the discussions and acts of the commissioners who had been reciprocally accredited.—Hence the preamble to his signature. The original American commissioners were Brevet Brigadier-General Worth, Brigadier-General Pillow, and Colonel Totten. Four more able or judicious officers could not have been desired.

"I have time to add but little more. The remaining details of the siege; the able co-operation of the United States squadron, successively under the command of Commodores Conner and Perry; the admirable conduct of the whole army—regulars and volunteers—I should be happy to dwell upon as they deserve; but the steamer Princeton, with Commodore Conner on board, is under-way, and I have commenced organizing an advance into the interior. This may be delayed a few days, waiting the arrival of additional means of transportation. In the meantime, a



joint operation, by land and water, will be made upon Alvarado. No lateral expedition, however, shall interfere with the grand movement toward the capital.

“ In consideration of the great services of Colonel Totten, in the siege that has just terminated most successfully, and the importance of his presence at Washington, as the head of the Engineer Bureau, I intrust this dispatch to his personal care, and beg to commend him to the very favorable consideration of the department.

“ I have the honor to remain, sir, with high respect, your most obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

“ HON. W. L. MARCY, Secretary of War.”

On the 26th, we were visited by another of those northers, which I have described, as occurring so frequently in the gulf, to the destruction of life and property. The anchorage at Sacrificios was crammed with men-of-war, and with merchantmen of every class and description—steamers with fresh troops ; vessels freighted with horses and mules ; storeships with provisions, etc. The gale blew with unusual severity, and started a great number of these ships from their anchors ; twenty-six of which finally went on shore, and were total losses, with their cargoes. Two, that were stranded north of the castle, lost most of their crews. The cargoes belonging to the government, the public loss could not have been less than half a million.

The 29th of March, the day of the surrender, was a *gala* day, with the navy and army before Vera Cruz. The sun rose brilliantly in an unclouded sky, and the sea-breeze came in gently and delightfully from the S. E. A green meadow of considerable extent, immediately south of the city, had been chosen as a place where the enemy was to lay down his arms ; and thither, at an early hour, repaired a host of spectators from the camp, the city, and the shipping—including the foreign men-of-war—to witness the ceremony. General Worth was chosen as the marshal of the day, and the officer to receive the surrender. A limited number was picked out from each corps of the army, to represent their brethren ; and Commodore Perry had detailed for the occasion, a number of officers and seamen to be present, on the part of the

squadron. At ten o'clock, the hour appointed in the articles of capitulation, the Mexican flags, which had been hoisted, as usual, at sunrise, on the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, and the forts of Santiago and Concepcion, were struck in these several places, saluted by the Mexican batteries; and in a few moments afterward, our glorious stripes and stars were unfolded to the breeze, under salutes from our own batteries and the squadron, and looked proudly forth over those arid sand-hills, and that wide gulf which had witnessed so many revolutions of empire during the last three hundred years. At this moment the enemy's troops were defiling out of the city gate; and, although the temptation seemed to be almost irresistible with the American multitude there assembled, to salute our proud banners with one long and loud hurra! good taste, and a sense of propriety, which, I venture to say, have not often been equaled, restrained them. The Mexicans were about five thousand strong. They were arrayed in their best uniforms—many of those of the officers being covered with the stars and embroidery of which this people is so fond—and marched, with music playing, beneath the standards of their respective corps.—Accompanying the soldiery, were many women and children—the women loaded down with their simple household effects, and the children trudging on by their sides, looking with amazement and wonder upon the spectacle before them.

Our men, on whose bronzed features were visible the joint emotions of pride of conquest, and sympathy for the fallen, were drawn up, under arms, in two lines, between which their late enemies passed. As each corps of the Mexican army reached a designated spot, the soldiers, in succession, divested themselves of their accoutrements, laid down these and their muskets, and passed on to the open fields, under *parole*, which they had previously given, "of not serving again in the present war, unless duly exchanged." All persons retained their private effects; and the officers were permitted, beside, to retain their horses with their caparisons, and their side-arms. This solemn and novel spectacle lasted several hours, and presented one of those striking pictures which linger in the imagination, long after the reality has passed away. The two gallant armies, arrayed in the pomp and panoply of war; the officers of the squadron, clad in their more modest blue and gold;

the seamen, with their rolling gait and holiday attire ; the meadow, the hills, the sea, and the glorious sunshine, all presented one of those *coups d'œil* which the pencil alone can portray.—General Worth was the “observed of all observers;” sitting his horse as proudly as a marshal of France, in the best days of the republic, and receiving the submission of the enemy, with a mingled dignity and grace, which he knew so well how to assume, and which became him so well. Thus ended the surrender of Vera Cruz.

A day or two after we had taken possession of the city, Gen. Quitman was dispatched, with his brigade, to capture Alvarado, a small town already described as lying a short distance up the river of the same name, about thirty miles S. E. of Vera Cruz. The boats of the squadron assisted the detachment across the small river, Medellin, that debouches a little south of Sacrificios ; and General Quitman marched rapidly forward, with the view of surprising the enemy, and carrying everything by a *coup de main*.—The march being by the sea beach, the first object that the troops would come upon, would be the fort at the entrance of the river. The engineers having been pushed forward to reconnoiter this position, their attention was attracted by a curious-looking Mexican flag, hoisted upon the fort. It did not look much like a Mexican flag either, they thought. What could it be ? Surely no *pronunciamiento* could have taken place since they left Vera Cruz, twenty-four hours before, and at that time Alvarado was undoubtedly in possession of the regular Mexican authorities ! They advance a little closer, take out their pocket handkerchiefs and wipe their glasses carefully, and take another look. “Why, surely, I cannot be mistaken,” at length said one of them, “that must be the American flag.” “The American flag ! how the devil did it get there ?” replied his companion. “That’s more than I can tell,” rejoined the first speaker ; “but the American flag it is, and no mistake.”

The facts are, Commodore Perry, who had intended to co-operate in person with General Quitman, in the capture of that place, had directed Captain Breese, of the sloop-of-war Albany, and Lieutenant Hunter, of the steamer Scourge, to precede him, to the bar of the river, and there lie at anchor, or cruise in observation,

until he should arrive. The Scourge arriving before the Albany, stood close in to the land, abreast of the fort, and being tempted by the opportunity, fired several shot into it. The fort, having no intention of resistance, since the fall of Vera Cruz, and understanding these shot as a summons to surrender, dispatched a boat to the Scourge, with an officer, who surrendered accordingly. Upon this, Lieutenant Hunter threw a midshipman and five men into the fort, as a garrison, hoisted the "queer looking Mexican flag" aforesaid, and pushed on to the towns of Alvarado, and Tlaco-talpam; of both of which he took possession, in like manner. A court martial grew out of these proceedings, which resulted in the censure of Lieutenant Hunter. Although the decision of the court was unquestionably right, on military principles, I cannot but think that both Commodore Perry and General Quitman suffered themselves to be unnecessarily exasperated by Hunter's conduct. The motives of an officer, on all such occasions, should be looked into, and Hunter's were unquestionably good. Without designing the least disrespect to his commanding officer, he thought he might fairly avail himself of a state of things, which had not been foreseen when the expedition was planned. If the surrender had been tendered to Hunter, previous to the firing of his guns, his conduct would have stood the test of the strictest military principles; it was the firing only, which constituted his disobedience, and vitiated the rest of his proceedings.

Commodore Perry now made Vera Cruz his head-quarters; his presence being required there to regulate the affairs of the shipping, and maintain a sort of police afloat. The harbor became henceforth, crowded with vessels; some under contract with the government, and some pushing their fortunes in the way of trade. European vessels began to come in also, on speculation, and probably, Vera Cruz, never before, presented such a spectacle of mingled thrift and warlike preparation. The mole resembled an eastern bazaar, in the motley crowd of all colors, creeds and costumes, with which it was constantly thronged. Spanish, French, German and other languages, with a large preponderance of good old English, met the ear, in a Babel-like confusion, and the pacific box and bale of commerce lay piled up indiscriminately with the terrible instruments of war.

Occupying a place at the pier end, were the mammoth guns of the navy battery, which had been transported thither to be embarked on board their respective ships. These guns had become quite famous since we had taken possession of the town, and had examined, more at our leisure, the terrible execution done by them. The quarter against which they had been served, had been reduced to a complete wreck of crumbling ruins, and a loaded wagon might have been driven through either of the two breaches in the walls which had been opened by the resistless momentum of their heavy metal.

Already, signs of the energy of our race began to appear, in the improvements of practical utility that met the eye on every hand. The reef of the Gallega, on which the proud old castle of San Juan de Ulloa had alternately slumbered in lordly repose, and awakened the echoes of war, for so many generations past, was degraded into a coal depôt for steamers; a substantial wharf of newly-sawed timber having been extended from it into the harbor, for the convenience of discharging and receiving the *materiel*. Sheds and wharves, for a similar purpose, had been constructed, also, at the island of Sacrificios. The channels of the harbor were marked out and buoyed, and pilot-boats from the Chesapeake might be seen daily, cruising many miles out at sea, to pick up inward-bound vessels. Forges, and other workshops for the squadron were erected on Green Island, and a commodious hospital already loomed up from the little sand key of Salmadina, at Anton Lizardo. Not the least of the improvements which had been made in the city, was the total revolution which had taken place in the custom-house.\* The eighty or ninety Mexican officials, who had formerly occupied this building, had, of course,

---

\* It is a remarkable fact, and one highly creditable to all concerned, that not one of the officers of the navy, appointed by Commodore Perry to collect the customs at the various ports, occupied by him (and there were six of them), failed to settle his accounts at Washington, at the end of the war. Although large sums were received, and the duties were of a novel, and frequently embarrassing nature, every cent of the public money was accounted for, to the entire satisfaction of the Navy Department. Nor was there ever a complaint made to the government, on the part of any Mexican, of undue appropriation of property, or personal violence of any kind, committed by a naval officer.

vacated their posts, and our friend, Dimond, the former consul of the port, with half a dozen assistants, now performed the increased duties of collection, with a simplicity and rapidity that astonished those who had been accustomed to the cumbrous machinery of the defunct government. In short, the apathy and indifference to improvement, amounting almost to contempt, of the Hispano-Mexican, had given place to the go-ahead-a-tiveness—new phases of society must have new words—of Brother Jonathan.

For some time past, Commodore Perry had meditated an attack against Tuspan, a small maritime town situated on the river of the same name, about a hundred miles north-west of Vera Cruz, on the bar of which, the reader may recollect, the brig Truxton was lost. The island of Lobos, which had been the rendezvous of a portion of General Scott's transports, previous to the landing at Vera Cruz, being near the mouth of this river, was designated as the rendezvous on this occasion. The Raritan, Albany, John Adams and Germantown, and the bomb vessels Vesuvius, Etna and Hecla having been dispatched a day or two previously, Commodore Perry himself, in the steamer Mississippi, having in tow his usual mosquito fleet, consisting of the steamers Spitfire, Vixen and Scourge, and gun-schooners Bonita, Petrel, and Reefer, got under-way on the 12th of April, and arrived at this island the next day. Here, twenty-four hours were spent in organizing landing parties, and practicing field exercises, with an excellent battery of light artillery, which Commodore Perry had organized for such occasions. On the 15th we left Lobos for the anchorage under Tuspan reef—ten or twelve miles from the mouth of the river. Although it was the middle of April, we were separated, during the night, by a norther, and were not able to concentrate at the new rendezvous until the 17th. The whole of this day was spent in sounding and buoying the bar, preparing the boats, etc. It being doubtful whether the steamers Spitfire and Vixen could enter the river, they were successively hauled alongside the Raritan, where their masts were taken out, and they were otherwise lightened to the requisite draught. This operation occupied us a greater part of the night, but our seamen worked "with a will," under the excitement of an occasional "splice of the main-brace"—extra glass of grog—and the prospect of a "bit of a row" en

the morrow. Jack hoped to have a fight, but fight or no fight, he had made up his mind to have a frolic. On the morning of the 18th, everything being in readiness, the small steamers, gun-schooners and barges moved in, to the bar, which being passed without accident, we lay to a few moments, to marshal the numerous small vessels and boats for the approach to the town. The flotilla was divided into three lines, each one being in tow of a steamer—Commodore Perry leading, in the Spitfire. The heavy vessels, which were lying outside, as well as the Ohio and Potomac, which had been left at Vera Cruz, were all represented by detachments; the whole being under the command of Captain Breese, the senior captain present. About one o'clock, P. M., we moved up the river. The river is a narrow stream, not averaging more than from two to three hundred yards in width, and is bordered by extensive marshes and lagunes for some distance up; which give place, a mile or two before reaching the town, to firm and thickly-wooded banks; the tangled undergrowth running occasionally into the water. The town is situated on the left bank, and its preparations for defense were extensive and most judicious. In the lower end of the town, and immediately on the river bank, was an eminence of some eighty or one hundred feet in height, called Cerro del Hospital, on the summit of which was placed a thirty-two-pounder carronade, mounted on a pivot, so as to command the river to the extent of its range, and surrounded by a ditch. At the base of this hill, and a little higher up the river, at the levee or landing-place of the town, was placed a nine-pounder carriage gun, for the protection of this point. On the opposite bank of the river were two forts, *La Peña*, or the Cliff, situated on a bluff sixty feet in height, about a mile and a half below the town, and the *Palma Sola*—so called from a solitary palm-tree, which grew within it—higher up, and at the junction of a small tributary with the Tuspan. The first of these forts was armed with two thirty-two-pounder carronades—these guns had all been taken from the wreck of the Truxton—mounted *en barbette* on half circles, and one long-nine, in embrasure, behind a breast-work. Between these guns were *banquettes* for the service of infantry. This fort commanded the downward course of the river for two miles. *La Palma Sola*, higher up, also looked down the stream, and was

armed with two long eighteens, in embrasure. There were *Sanquettes* here, also, for infantry. Thus, it will be seen, that in order to approach the town, we were compelled to stem the current of a narrow stream, hedged in on both banks with a thick growth of trees and jungle, for the distance of three miles and a half, under the enemy's fire, and that fire a raking one. General Cos, who had become famous, or rather infamous, in the Texan campaign of Santa Anna, commanded, and had under him, some six hundred men; ample garrisons for all these works. Commodore Perry, whose flag was flying on board the *Spitfire*, and who, as we have said, was leading the attack, when he came within range of the enemy's fire, hove to, for a moment, ordered the several steamers to cast off their tows, and directed the sail vessels to continue up under sail; the sea-breeze had now set in, and being favorable, this was quite practicable. Upon the advance being renewed, the enemy opened upon us a sharp and well-directed fire from the *Peña*, followed in succession by the *Palma Sola* and the Cerro Hospital.

When we had approached sufficiently near for this fire to begin to produce its effect, Commodore Perry pushed ahead gallantly, in the *Spitfire*, under a press of steam, and was followed as gallantly by the whole flotilla; the schooners crowding their canvas, and plying their sweeps, while the seamen of the barges buckled to their oars, to see who should be "first in at the death." The enemy beginning now to use grape and canister—the Mexicans put up the nicest kind of ammunition—the affair began to become a little serious. The whole surface of the river was rained upon by a profuse shower of all kinds of missiles; and Jack began to think, in good earnest, that he had got into "a bit of a row."—But this only made him "give way" the faster, to get at his enemy; and in a few minutes, the detachment of Commander Buchanan having come up within carrying distance of the *Peña* (the Germantown was celebrated for the excellence and speed of her boats), Commodore Perry directed this officer "to storm." "Aye, aye, sir!" was the ready response of the gallant commander—and in half a dozen strokes more of his powerful oars, he leaped into the fort, followed pell-mell by his officers and men. The Mexicans, dropping rammers and sponges, fled in every direction;



and in a moment more, a loud cheer, re-echoed by the rest of the fleet, announced the success of the storming, and greeted the stars and stripes as they were planted on the crest of the Peña.—In the meantime, the steamers and schooners had been pouring in a rapid and destructive fire, first of round-shot, and then of grape and canister. Commodore Perry, in the *Spitfire*, who had approached within fifteen or twenty paces of the left bank, just below the town, and slackened his speed, that his Commander, Tattnall, might deliver his fire with more effect, was now suddenly assaulted by a party of infantry, which had concealed itself in a jungle, and was suffering a good deal from its fire; several of the officers and men having been shot down, at the first discharge. Seeing a boat from the *Raritan* near him, at the moment, he directed the officer to charge the jungle, and dislodge the enemy. This order was speedily obeyed, and the enemy driven from the river bank; the officer, with his command, pursuing him into the town, of which he took possession, after having first charged and carried the Cerro Hospital, which commands it. The *Palma Sola*, in like manner, was carried about this time—Lieutenant Perry, a son of the commodore, being among the first to enter it—and thus, the enemy, being beaten at all points, a general route ensued. General Perfecto de Coa, commandant of the Windward military division of the Mexican army, practicing the tactics of his able superior, General Santa Anna, had, early in the action, taken himself out of “harm’s way,” like a good boy! As pursuit was impossible, and as there was no particular object to be gained by it, Commodore Perry contented himself with establishing his head-quarters in the town, and sending small parties to hold possession of the forts, until they could be dismantled, and the artillery destroyed or carried off. Our loss in this affair amounted to fourteen, in killed and wounded; among the latter were Commander Tattnall, and Lieutenants Whittle, Hartstene, and Parker. Poor Parker died, several months after this, of yellow fever. He had already become much distinguished in the war, and was mourned sincerely by all who knew his excellent heart, and appreciated his fine intellect.

Notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts were made to prevent it, Jack would have his “frolic,” that night, as he had

promised himself ; and perhaps it was nothing more than fair, after the labor he had undergone, and the "bit of a row" he had been in. It might be difficult to assign any reason for the difference, but it is none the less true, that sailors are very unlike soldiers, in a place carried by storm. There was no blood-thirstiness or brutality practiced on the inhabitants, on this occasion, by the seamen. They helped themselves to a glass of grog wherever they found it, and rolled good-naturedly through the streets, now and then frightening some damsel with a little awkward love making ; but, with the exception of their breaking into General Cos's house, and drinking his health, in a bottle of champagne, we heard of no disorders. The discipline which the seaman is taught when sober, he rarely forgets when drunk. Although it was impossible to prevent them from straggling, they were always obedient and respectful when discovered by their officers and ordered back to their quarters. The next day, they were carefully gathered together, like so many truant and penitent school-boys, and sent off to their respective ships ; not however before one or two of the poor fellows had been barbarously murdered, in the outskirts of the town.

Commodore Perry remained two or three days longer, to organize a sort of government afloat, which, without the intervention of a garrison in the town, should have control of the custom-house, and receive the dues in the name of the United States. Captain Breese, of the Albany, and Lieutenant Turner, of the Reefer, whose vessels were to remain at anchor, under the reef, were designated as the chiefs of this novel government.

An expedition was sent up the river also, under the command of Capt. Forrest, assisted by Commander Buchanan, to seize any vessels or launches the enemy might have secreted. We were gone part of a day, and a night, and were not only successful in making several prizes, but were surprised and delighted by the novelty and richness of the scenery, presented to us at every step, on the green bosom of this placid little stream. Civilization seemed scarcely to have reached this out-of-the-way portion of the Mexican republic. With the exception of occasional corn-fields, the growth of which rivaled that of our richest bottom lands in the west, the country seemed an unbroken wilderness. The

Indian built his thatched hut of reeds on the bank of the stream, and paddled his primitive canoe, precisely as he had done in the days of the "conquest;" and with a little assistance from fancy, we might have transported ourselves back three centuries, without doing violence, except in point of time, to historical propriety.—These simple people had heard the big guns below; and having received awful accounts from the flying soldiery, of the blood-thirsty doings of the terrible *Americanos del Norte*, in the town, they generally fled at our approach, leaving their corn-fields and rude huts alike at our mercy. We bivouacked in a corn-field, as the night set in, and so far availed ourselves of the privileges of conquest, as to pluck as many of the delicious ears of corn, just then in the milk, as would feed our tired and famished seamen, who had been pulling their oars unremittingly for the last six or eight hours. The owner, whom we had hoped to conciliate and make some trifling present to, absconded, like the rest, upon our approach. His hut of reeds consisted of but a single room, with the dirt for a floor, and a mat or two for a bed. The pot was simmering away on the hearth, with the evening meal, and the cat sat dozing as quietly over the embers as though there had been no enemies about. We made good use of the old woman's gourd-full of eggs; and very nice turkey eggs they were; and made free with the contents of the pot, but molested nothing else. One of my sailors, who had been seized with a fancy for a trade, took down from a peg over the bed, rather a nice-looking *sombrero*—broad-rimmed straw-hat—and trying it on, and finding it to fit him, had hung his own up in its stead; but as my eye happened to fall on him, just at the moment, I made him "swap back," as the boys say. He defended himself by saying, that he meant no harm, and that "a fair exchange was no robbery," all the world over. The river meanders through a plain, many leagues in extent; the mountains west of us, among which the river takes its rise, being but faintly visible in the distance. Most of the plain is prairie; and we saw herds of fat cattle and horses apparently wild, feeding in droves of ten or a dozen, on the river banks. With the plow, and the man of "progress," this lovely valley of Tuspan might be made a sort of Sicilian storehouse for the supply of Indian corn, and other products of the *tierra caliente*.

We returned to the town the next morning, and a few days afterward the squadron was under-way on its return to Vera Cruz. The following is Commodore Perry's dispatch, reporting his late operations, to the navy department.

"UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP MISSISSIPPI,  
"At Sea, off Vera Cruz, April 24, 1847.

"SIR :—Tuspan being the only fortified place of importance, situated on the gulf coast, not in our possession, and conceiving it to be a point of honor, as well as a duty, to reclaim the guns taken by the enemy from the wreck of the Truxton, and mounted with others for the defense of the river and town, I determined on attacking it, and left Sacrificios in this ship, for that purpose, on the 12th instant, having in tow the steamers Spitfire, Vixen, and Scourge, and the gun-boats Bonita, Petrel, and Reefer, with a detachment of three hundred officers, seamen and marines, from the Ohio, distributed in this and the smaller vessels. On the following day, we arrived at Lobos, the appointed place of rendezvous. The Raritan, with a detachment of one hundred and eighty officers, seamen and marines, from the Potomac, added to her own complement; the Albany, John Adams, and Germantown, with the bomb-vessels Vesuvius, Etna, and Hecla, had been previously dispatched for Lobos, where they arrived in good time, and were subsequently joined by the Decatur.

"On the 15th, all the vessels left Lobos for the anchorage, under Tuspan reef, but were separated during the night by a norther. Having again concentrated, on the morning of the 17th, the whole of that day was employed in lightening the small vessels, in sounding and buoying the channel of the bar, and in other preparations for ascending the river.

"The following morning (the 18th), the bar was safely crossed by the steamers and gun-boats, with about thirty barges filled with detachments from the different vessels at anchor outside, having with them four pieces of artillery.

"After crossing the bar, I hoisted my flag on board the Spitfire, and immediately led up the river to the attack; the steamers having the gun-boats and barges in tow, until we got into the range of fire of the enemy, when I ordered them to cast off; the gun-

boats to follow up the river under sail; and the detachments in the barges to land with the artillery and storm the forts and town.— These orders were executed with extraordinary rapidity, while the flotilla continued its course up the river, and driving, by its well-directed fire, the enemy from his defenses.

“ The dispositions of the enemy for defense were judicious; they consisted of two forts on the right, and one on the left bank of the river, with positions well selected for commanding the reaches of the stream. They had seven guns mounted, and detachments of infantry firing from the forts and the thick chapparal along the margin of the left bank.

“ General Cos, chief of the Windward military division of the Mexican army, was in command, and had with him, as is believed from the evidence of his order-book, about six hundred and fifty rank and file.

“ But if the dispositions for defense were judicious, the defense itself was feeble; though, had it been more obstinate, the results would have been the same, for I cannot exaggerate the intrepidity of our officers and men, or say too much of the spirit that animated them.

“ The Truxton's guns were brought off, and the others destroyed; the forts were also destroyed.

“ Our loss in the attack has been small—fourteen killed and wounded. The inclosed papers, lettered A, B, C, and D, will furnish all necessary details.

“ The Albany and Reefer have been left to watch Tuspan; the Hecla is ordered to blockade Soto de la Marina; the Etna to occupy the river Tobasco; and the Vesuvius and Porpoise, the port of Laguna; while the Germantown is scouring the coast north of Lobos.

“ I am, sir, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

“ M. C. PERRY, Comm'd'g Home Squadron.

“ Hon. JOHN Y. MASON, Secretary of the Navy, Washington.”

On the same day on which our sharp little skirmish occurred at Tuspan, the great battle of Cerro Gordo was fought; the army seeming determined to monopolize the attention of the press and the country, to the exclusion of its less fortunate brethren of the

naval service. We had hoped, before we heard of this event, to have had our more humble exploits heralded forth to the public in conspicuous editorials, and with *capitals*, but we scarcely attained the dignity of the poet's corner, in the village newspapers. *Se transit*—the reader knows the rest.

I have now arrived at that period, in my memoirs, where it will become necessary for me to take a temporary leave of the squadron; in which I had served nearly two years, and join General Scott's head-quarters, at Jalapa. The reader has probably not forgotten the fate of Passed-Midshipman Rogers, who was captured, as he has been informed, while making, with Dr. Wright of the *Somers*, a daring night reconnoissance of the enemy's powder magazine, on the main-land, near the little island of Sacrificios. This young officer, who, contrary to all the laws of war, had been seized as a spy, had been kept for some time in close confinement in Vera Cruz; was marched thence to the famous castle of Perote (the Bastile of Mexico), where he had been again confined; and whence, after the battle of Cerro Gordo, he had been removed to the city of Mexico. This harsh treatment created a good deal of sympathy for him in the United States, and coming to the notice of the president, he resolved to make a special protest against it to the Mexican government, and to threaten it with retaliation, in case it should dare to execute its threat of treating its prisoner as a spy. The ground on which the Mexican government based its pretension of thus treating the passed-midshipman was, that he had been taken in disguise, which was not the fact. He had indeed, proposed to me that I should permit him to make the reconnoissance by day, in the undress of an English passed-midshipman, or mate, but I had objected to it on the very ground, that if captured in this dress, he would subject himself to be treated as a spy. I had, therefore, required both him and Dr. Wright to go armed, and wear their appropriate uniforms, which they had done—throwing over all, their pea-jackets, to guard themselves against the night air. Commodore Perry having received instructions from the Hon. John Y. Mason, then secretary of the navy, directing him, in the name of the president, to send a special messenger to the city of Mexico, armed with the protest above mentioned, selected me for that service, and sending for me on board the flag-ship, explained to me

his views and intentions in the premises. I was but too happy, as the reader may suppose, to be made the means of wresting my late gallant subordinate, from the clutches of the enemy, and at the same time to become a looker on, and a follower, from an humble distance, of that great army which had already rivaled, and was about to surpass, the fame of Cortez. The halls of the Montezumas! there was a romance in the idea, which fired my imagination, and prevented me from sleeping that night, when I retired to my now lonely and distasteful state-room, in the ward-room of the *Raritan*. I was up betimes, next morning, forthwith summoned the gunner to prepare me revolving pistols, cartridges, cutlasses, and other murderous implements, and sent for my lazy lout of a boy, and directed him to pack up my kit in double quick time, as I was off to the "Halls of the Montezumas!" Commodore Perry having given me leave to take one of the young seamen of the squadron along with me, as an attendant and sort of sub-aid-de-camp, I selected Francis Seymour, a shrewd and courageous lad of about nineteen, who accompanied me in all my wanderings, passed through various adventures "on his own hook" beside, and finally returned with me to the squadron. About ten o'clock, A. M., Commodore Perry having sent me the following instructions, I took a hasty, but affectionate leave of my messmates, embarked on board the steamer *Vixen*, and that night slept in Vera Cruz.

"U. S. FLAG-SHIP, MISSISSIPPI,

*"Anton Lizardo, April 28th, 1847.*

"SIR:—Having been made fully acquainted with the intentions of the United States government, respecting the position in which Passed Midshipman R. C. Rogers has been placed by the Mexican authorities, and of the mission with which you have been intrusted, I have to direct that you proceed with all practicable dispatch, to the head-quarters of General Scott; and, after delivering into his hands, the communication addressed to him, take his instructions as to the most advisable means for you to adopt, to enable you to present, in person, the dispatch addressed to the minister of foreign relations of Mexico; a course which I should prefer; or if it be impracticable for you to penetrate safely, to the

seat of government, to take such measures as to secure the safe and speedy delivery of the dispatch to the functionary to whom it is addressed ; in which latter alternative, you will forward it, with a communication from yourself, notifying your intention of waiting at the head-quarters of the army for the reply.

“Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“M. C. PERRY, Comm'd'g Home Squadron.

“Lieut. RAPHAEL SEMMES, United States Navy.”

The following is a copy of Commodore Perry's letter to General Scott, asking his favorable attention to the object of my mission, and requesting of him the requisite assistance to enable me to carry out the views of the president.

“U. S. FLAG-SHIP, MISSISSIPPI,

“*Anton Lizardo, April 28th, 1847.*

“SIR :—I have received instructions from the secretary of the navy, under date of the 27th ult., directing me, in the name of the president, to protest against the unjust and cruel pretension of the Mexican government, to hold Passed Midshipman R. C. Rogers in rigorous confinement, and to try him as a spy—and I am instructed to signify the intention of the president, to resort to the severest measures of retaliation, unless that young officer is immediately placed upon the footing of a prisoner of war ; and as such, held entitled to an early exchange.

“The urgency of the order to carry out these instructions in the most prompt and expeditious manner, has induced me to dispatch my communication (a copy of which is inclosed) by a special messenger, and Lieutenant Semmes, late commander of the Somers, to which Mr. Rogers belonged, has been intrusted with the duty.

“He has instructions to apply to you, for the proper means of placing himself in communication with the advanced posts of the enemy, that he may pass on to the present seat of the Mexican government—if so permitted—there to present, in person, the demand for the release of Mr. Rogers. I shall be greatly obliged, if you will give the necessary orders for advancing Lieutenant Semmes, safely on his way—and I would respectfully suggest,



whether in the event of failure of the object of the mission of Lieut. Semmes, the release of Mr. Rogers may not be stipulated for, in whatever terms of capitulation, or exchange of prisoners may next be entered into with the enemy.

“With great respect,

I have the honor to be your ob’t serv’t,

“M. C. PERRY, Comm’d’g Home Squadron.

“Major-Gen. WINFIELD SCOTT, General-in-chief U. S. Army.”

Arriving in Vera Cruz early in the day, I presented my requisition upon the quarter-master’s department for a couple of horses, with their accoutrements; went to the stables and selected them; provided myself with one or two traveling necessities, and otherwise put things in train for my departure the next day. There had been some guerrilla warfare along the road; but as yet, it had not become so serious, but that a small escort would be sufficient. I contented myself, therefore, with a detachment of twenty mounted Tennessee rifles, whom the governor, Colonel Wilson, kindly caused to be detailed for the purpose. I dined at the *Casa de Diligencias*, a hotel kept by a surly old Scotchman, who had scarcely regained his good humor since the bombardment; his house having suffered from the explosion of one or two shells, and Tattnall, with his musquito fleet, having shattered some of his doors and windows. His table was now crowded with hungry officers; and he seemed to be making up for what little he had suffered, by reaping a rich harvest from his late enemies; all of whom he charged war prices, and to whom he gave war fare. Poor Parker dined with me here for the last time. He was on shore recruiting himself, after much suffering from his wound, received at Tuspan.

It was late, the next day, before we got off; my volunteer escort having many little arrangements to make, and many *last things*; those troublesome impediments to the commencement of a journey, to think of. We were finally mounted, however; Seymour and I, on heavy cavalry horses, with warlike-looking holsters in front of our saddles, cutlasses girded round our waists, and a bountiful supply of *serapes*—blankets of the country, fancifully figured—and edibles for the road. We passed out at the

*Garita de Mexico*—city gate, on the Mexican road—about five o'clock in the afternoon, and for sometime followed the beach ; on which were lying high and dry on the sands, the wrecks of several transports, that had been driven on shore—some of the seamen having perished—in the terrible norther of the 26th of March, the day of the surrender of the city. Numbers of people were flocking into the town, having recovered somewhat from their fright ; horses, donkeys and mules freighted with men, women and children, and various household effects, forming lively and picturesque cavalcades. We now struck into the country, leaving behind us the magnificent ocean ; on which Seymour and I both turned to gaze, it might be, for the last time, and followed over sand-hills and through ravines, dotted with gnarled and stunted trees ; the more humid spots being covered with an undergrowth of vines and thorny shrubs—a distance of nine miles ; when we entered the little village of Santa Fé, consisting of a cluster of huts, thatched with the palm-leaf, and blackened by the weather. Here we came up with a wagon-train, which had halted for the night. As I had been requested to join this train, and give it the protection of my escort, I halted also, for the night, and was glad to take shelter from the drizzling rain, through which we had ridden for the last half hour. The alcalde, whose hut was only distinguished from the rest by being a little larger, and having more dirt for the floor, had no beds to give us—indeed, we had wisely made up our minds to forego this luxury for the future—but he gave us what was the next best thing in a rainy night—a dry plank in the loft. Here I am in this loft, jotting down by the dismal light of a farthing candle, stuck in its own grease, on the top of an ancient chest-of-drawers, these veritable memoirs ; and as comfort is comparative, am congratulating myself on the prospect of a quiet night's sleep—that is to say, when I get my coffee, which the alcalde is preparing in the kitchen, with his own hands. I had scarcely unharnessed myself, and handed my horse over to Seymour, when a villain stole one of my revolvers, which I had carelessly laid down on a bench. With the assistance of the alcalde, whom I summoned from the kitchen fire, to act in his magisterial capacity, I soon got on the track of the rogue, however ; and coming upon him just as he had

fired one of the barrels in the road, to see how he liked it, I seized him, to his great astonishment—it was dark—and made him deliver up. I am sorry to add that the scamp was one of our Anglo-Saxon teamsters, picked up, perhaps, somewhere in the *purlieus* of the "Bowery." In consideration of his blood, and of his being one of the heroes of Mexico, I released him from other penalty than a sharp reprimand, enjoining him to remember, for the future, however, his long and honorable descent all the way from the Danish pirates, who were robbers of land only. Seymour and I appropriated to ourselves, when it was time to retire, a couple of spare cot-frames, which we found in the loft; and with the assistance of our india-rubber traveling-bags for pillows, and our *serapes*, made ourselves very comfortable beds, on which we soon fell asleep, lulled by the pattering of the rain on the palm-leaves of the roof, the occasional chattering of a guinea-fowl, and now and then a little of the national music of the country—the braying of a donkey. I awoke several times during the night, as some one of these ambitious little animals, with a more sonorous sound-apparatus than usual, would endeavor to outdo his companions; and as often as I awoke, I heard the merry voices of our volunteers and teamsters, over their little camp fires in the street, now singing short snatches of some favorite song, and now discussing the politics of their native country, and the merits of the Mexican war. As I dozed away again, the words, Texas, Rio Grande, Mr. Polk, and General Scott, intermixed with

"Molly is the gal for me!"

would strike with dying and dreamy cadences on the tympanum. These signs of vigilance assuring me that there was no danger of a surprise from the enemy, I slept with quiet nerves, and undisturbed by the hum of a single mosquito; by which persevering little insects I had been nearly bitten to death, the night before, in Vera Cruz, notwithstanding the protection of a somewhat dilapidated mosquito bar. A few fleas, those tenants-in-fee, of every Spanish house, made my acquaintance early in the night, but I was too weary to regard them. I was aroused, at early daylight, by the general stir in the camp, and by the shrill voice of the lieutenant in command of the infantry portion of the detachment, calling his men to arms, preparatory to a movement. Seymour had already

arisen, and having made interest with the *alcalde* in behalf of the *commandante*—the high-sounding Mexican title he began now to give me, when he wished to make me appear important, soon appeared with a smoking cup of coffee, and an earthen *brasero*, with a live coal in it, at which, according to Mexican custom, I was expected to light my cigar, as soon as I had swallowed my coffee.

Having permitted the wagons and the infantry escort, to precede us a short distance, we mounted, and bidding adieu to the *alcalde* and his hospitable loft, rode briskly forward, overtaking the train in about half an hour. It was delightful to inhale the morning air, as it came to us, lowered several degrees in temperature by the preceding night, and charged with the dewy perfume of flower and shrub. The road had become sensibly better—the track being quite firm, and the scenery around, by contrast with the dreary sand-hills and arid plains through which we had hitherto passed, really enchanting. As yet, there was no forest, but here and there, on the slopes of the hills, in the valleys, and by the margin of an occasional stream, clumps of palm, and other tropical trees, of new and beautiful foliage, appeared—all looking fresh and green after the rain of the previous night. The cleared spots were just putting forth their first offering of grass to the rainy season, now commencing in the low-lands, and herds of cattle were grazing quietly in the distance—lending an air of peace and rural quiet to the scene, scarcely in keeping with the idea, that an invading army had passed over the route, only a few days before. The only signs of war, beside the clanking of sabres and the jingling of spurs, in my own cavalcade, were occasionally a broken wagon, and a dead horse or mule, lying in the middle of the road. Indeed, I had frequent occasion to remark upon the destruction of quarter-masters' property along the whole route, arising from the incompetency of wagon-masters, the carelessness and drunkenness of teamsters, and the general want of organization, and accountability, in the corps. At Vera Cruz, I had equally noticed this—piles of valuable stores having been exposed there, for days, on the beach and elsewhere, to the depredation of thieves, and the destruction caused by wind and weather. But this is one of the penalties which republics pay, more than any other forms of government, for the want of a precedent military organization suffi-

ciently large to embrace all the purposes, and cover all the requirements, of war; and the penalty is, no doubt, the lesser evil of the two. The road again becoming heavy after we had traveled a few miles, several of the wagons lagged behind, and we were obliged to halt, to wait for them. We turned out of the road to the right, and hitching our horses under some fine shade-trees, that grew on the banks of the little river, San Juan, whose clear and rapid stream went tumbling and brawling over its stony bed, we unpacked our haversacks, and spreading their contents on the green sward, made our first camp breakfast. We whiled away several indolent hours here, waiting for the wagon-masters to bring up their rearward teams; and while we were waiting, General Pillow, who was descending to Vera Cruz with a small escort, joined us. He was just from the army, and gave us many items of intelligence, which we had not previously received. He had been wounded slightly at the battle of Cerro Gordo, and was returning home on temporary leave. I had the pleasure of being the first to inform him of his having been promoted to the rank of Major-General. I was struck with the youthful appearance of this gentleman, he not being over thirty-five. He was of the middle size, with a light and agile figure, handsome countenance, with expressive black eyes, and conversed with ease and fluency. He afterward acquired much reputation in the Mexican war—a reputation which will read well for him in history, long after the slanders of those who were jealous of his fame, shall have passed away and been forgotten. It should be remembered, too, that more or less jealousy existed in the regular ranks, against the volunteers, and that it was this feeling which prompted many of the newspaper attacks of the period. When we consider that General Pillow had been advanced from the walks of civil life—he was a member of the bar in Tennessee—to the high and responsible position of a major-general in the army, the exercise of whose functions calls for so much and so various military talent, we cannot but admit that he commanded his division with great success, and that he molded the heterogeneous materials, with which he had at first to operate, into a well-ordered, martial phalanx, who reflected much credit both upon their general and their country.

## CHAPTER IX.

Journey continued—Hacienda of Mango de Clavo, the residence of Santa Anna—The Mexican litera—The fair Jalapeñas—Dead body of a soldier—Night encampment and an alarm—Arrival at the Paso de Ovejas, and interview with the alcalde—The author and his horse—Arrival at Puente Nacional, and encampment in another of the houses of Santa Anna—View from the height of the Cuesta de la Calera—Traces of war visible on the road—Arrival at Plan del Rio, in the vicinity of Cerro Gordo—The place of encampment preceding the battle—The hospital and the graves of the common soldiery—Description of the battle of Cerro Gordo—Continuation of journey, and arrival at Jalapa.

In the afternoon we were again in the saddle. The teams being composed of the small horses and mules of the country, made slow work of it, and frequently stalled—although their loads did not average more than about eight hundred pounds—sometimes rendering it necessary for us to abandon a wagon altogether, throwing away all the heavier articles, with which it was laden, and transferring the lighter ones to other teams. In the course of the afternoon we passed the first *hacienda*—country estate—we had yet seen. It burst upon our view as we were winding our way up the first considerable eminence we had ascended. It was the celebrated Mango de Clavo, the favorite country-seat of Santa Anna, to which he has been wont, in the intervals of his power, to retire to plot fresh treason against the ill-fated republic. The mansion-house was of stone, of considerable extent, and some architectural pretension, and looking out from a beautiful grove of forest trees, by which it was partially embowered, commanded a view of an extensive valley, covered with rich grasses, and the first cornfield we had passed. The plain was dotted with clumps of trees, in the meadows between which, were grazing numerous herds of cattle, and some horses. Here we came across the first fruit, also, which we encountered in our journey—the Xicaco plum, growing in a wild state. We afterward found many of the fields

on the way-side, inclosed by hedges of these trees, and had only to ride beneath them to gather the fruit from their overhanging branches, without alighting from our horses. We passed on the road two clumsy *lúteras* (the *litera* is a vehicle composed of a sort of sedan chair slung between two long poles or shafts projecting before and behind, and secured together by transverse pieces let in by mortice) carried by mules rudely harnessed, in which were seated two fair Jalapeñas, mother and daughter, traveling from Vera Cruz to Jalapa, without other attendants than the drivers, or rather riders, who bestrode the foremost mules, and two or three boys in the rear, who brought up relays of fresh animals. The daughter was so beautiful, that I was afraid to do more, than admire her from a respectful distance; but I rode up alongside the mother, and entered into conversation with her, being curious to know something of her sensations in the presence of my mounted Tennesseans, who with their long beards, slouched felt hats, and clanking sabres, were savage enough, in appearance, to alarm a stouter heart. To my question as to whether she was not afraid to travel thus alone, on a road infested with the *barbaros del norte*—barbarians of the north—she replied with a quiet smile, full of composure, “No señor, *ninguno*”—“No sir, not all”—a compliment which was highly gratifying to me, as an American.

Soon after leaving the fair Jalapeñas, we passed a sight of a very different kind—the dead body of one of our soldiers, who had been killed in a skirmish, a few days before, while escorting a train. The country now became more generally wooded, as we advanced; the cactus abounded in many beautiful and novel varieties, and the gum guaiacum, with its yellow blossoms, gave a cheerful aspect to the landscape. We occasionally passed magnificent shade trees on the road side, inviting the sun-burned traveler to pause and rest his weary steed; which invitations we frequently accepted, as we were obliged to make many halts to wait for the train. These trees were loaded with a profusion of white flowers, whose fragrance it was delicious to inhale. Just as the sun went down, we turned off the road to the right, and encamped for the night, on the bank of a small stream, which we had just crossed. We had, as yet, traveled but eighteen miles from Vera Cruz, and were still twelve miles distant from the

Puente Nacional. I alighted from my horse quite unwell, and not at all pleased with the idea of spending the night in the woods, without a tent; but there was no alternative, and so I set to work, with the assistance of my man Friday, to make the best preparations I could for the emergency. Selecting the shelter of a couple of small trees, whose branches, interlacing overhead, formed a sort of canopy sufficiently dense to protect me from the dew, I spread my horse-blankets and *serapes* on a pile of leaves, and slept as comfortably as I could have done in my state-room, on board the *Raritan*; barring the assaults, during the night, of a score and more of ticks, which seemed to be remarkably hungry. As for supper, Seymour and I, with that conditional familiarity, which such occasions will beget, each cooked his own—that is to say, we toasted a beefsteak on the point of a forked stick, and made ourselves an excellent cup of coffee, in a tin pot. The crickets, the tree-frogs, and the catyids, with an occasional whippowil, and screech-owl, sang their lullaby all night long; while the numerous fireflies illuminated the dark recesses of the woods with their tiny but brilliant lamps. We were alarmed, toward midnight, by the firing of one of our pickets upon a horseman, traveling at a rapid rate, who did not seem disposed to halt until forcibly brought to, by the whiz of a musket ball near his ear. This midnight traveler proved to be Don Rafael Boraza, the courier attached to the English embassy at the capital. He was bearing his monthly dispatches for the steam packet at Vera Cruz. Upon his making himself known, we permitted him to depart immediately. Don Rafael has become somewhat remarkable, in Mexico, for the rapidity and regularity of his trips between the capital and Vera Cruz. For twenty years past, he has been in the habit of making this distance—two hundred and fifty-two miles—on horseback, in thirty-six hours! In the whole of this time, he has never lost a single trip; and such is the *prestige* attending John Bull and his agents, in all parts of the world, that he has never been molested by the bandits, who infest the roads, and who have laid their unscrupulous hands upon almost everybody else.

I was aroused, soon after daylight, by the general stir in the camp, although the dilatory wagon-train delayed our departure until after nine o'clock. One or two of the teams had broken



down, and been left several miles in the rear, the previous evening, and it became necessary that they should be brought up, before we could proceed. The country now became more hilly and arid, and we soon left behind us the agreeable verdure by which we had been surrounded. The ground, in every direction, was covered with loose bowlders of blackened rock, that seemed to have been belched forth upon the desert of sand, in ages long gone by, by volcanoes now become extinct; and a parched and stunted vegetation of tree and shrub, struggling for very existence in the pinching drowth—the periodical rains had not as yet penetrated so far from the coast—scarcely sufficed to relieve the dreary prospect, with the sign of vegetation. The cactus, the gum-guaiacum, and their almost leafless companion, the Xicaco plum, formed exceptions to this general prevalence of sterility, and defied alike the scorching rays of the sun, and the withering drowth; and we could not but admire the apparent design of Providence, in spreading this latter tree, with a profuse hand, through so sterile and sun-burned a district; as if to refresh, with its tempting fruit, the famishing traveler. The substratum of this region is limestone; and where the road has been denuded of sand and vegetable decomposition, it has been pulverized to an impalpable powder, which lies, in some places, six inches thick. Upon this the sun beats down with a fierceness, that makes both man and horse quail beneath it. About noon we reached the little village of Paso de Ovejas—Sheep Pass—situated on a small stream, which had been dwarfed by the drowth, into a mere thread of the most limpid water. Here we halted, for a few minutes, to water our animals and to concentrate our train. I found that I was quite an object of admiration in all the small villages we passed through, or rather, that my horse was. The fact is, being no judge of horse-flesh myself, I had intrusted the selection of my steed to a former shipmate, who, many years before, had been a brother midshipman with me, in one of our frigates, but who, having left the service for some cause, had become an attaché of the quarter-master's department in Vera Cruz. My late shipmate, although he professed to be a connoisseur in animals, had mounted me on the very largest and clumsiest horse he could find in the camp. He was, indeed, a monster, standing, I am afraid

to say, how many hands high, and with legs little less in circumference than those of an elephant. It was with the utmost difficulty I could clamber up his immense sides; and Seymour, instead of holding my stirrup for me, as in duty bound, as a faithful servitor of a knight errant, was obliged to boost me up into my saddle. Sitting astride this monster, with a most uncomfortable expansion of crotch, armed with a small battery of artillery in front, and having a huge roll of blankets and pea-jackets strapped on behind, the simple Indians would gather around me, as children are wont to do around an elephant at a menagerie—it must be remembered that the Mexican horses are mere ponies—and regard my steed with somewhat the same astonishment. Without the aid of Seymour's title, they invariably ran out to me with the largest and coolest calabashes of water, and sefiored me with a reverence of which my horse would, no doubt, have been exceedingly proud, could he have understood what was going on.

One of our wagons having broken down just before we reached this place, I sent for the *alcalde*, and put it and its contents under his charge; exacting of him the most solemn promises, which he rendered me with a profusion even greater than I desired, that he would deliver it over to the next train that should come along. Of course, his "honor" appropriated it as lawful prize of war, as soon as I had ridden out of sight.

We reached the Puente Nacional early in the afternoon, and having parked our train with suitable guards, in the Ventilla—a small village near the bridge—I *encamped* with my Tennesseans, in General Santa Anna's residence; an elegant stone mansion, with tessellated marble floors, situated on a rising ground near by, and overlooking the picturesque Antigua for many miles of its tortuous course. The scenery here, with its confluence of two rivers, reminded me very much of Harper's Ferry, except that it is on a smaller scale, and the hill sides more naked. The bridge is an imposing structure of substantial and well executed masonry, and has five arches of thirty feet each. The stream, when swollen by the rains, is about a hundred yards wide; but it was now dwindled to a mere brook, fretting and toiling over its rocky bed. This is one of the strong passes on the road to Mexico, and it was rumored, after the capture of Vera Cruz, that Santa Anna intended

to make a stand here. He did hold it for a few days, but finally fell back upon Cerro Gordo, which he deemed a stronger position. To my unmilitary eye, it seemed as though a hundred men could hold it against a host. The road, for a mile before it reaches the bridge, is a defile, hedged in on both sides by abrupt and precipitous heights, and is commanded, as well as the bridge itself, by one or more points, up which a goat could scarcely clamber.

Toward sunset, although still quite feverish, I descended the steep bank of the river in the rear of my new quarters, and enjoyed a most luxurious bath in the classic Antigua; a stream which has been indissolubly associated, by the pen of Cortez, with the renown of the conquerors. The house of Santa Anna was almost entirely stripped of furniture; an elegant mahogany bedstead, richly carved and gilded, being the only memento in the room in which I slept, of the family of the absent chieftain. During the night we had a magnificent thunder-storm; the lightning playing in mimic gambols over the marble pavements, and the thunder reverberating with startling effect through the deserted building. The copious shower of rain which followed, cooled the atmosphere to such a degree, that we found a blanket quite comfortable before morning. There was no sleeping after daylight, for my volunteers were already astir at four o'clock, lighting their camp fires in the court-yard, and leading and even riding their horses through the "marble halls" of Santa Anna, on their way to the river to water them. The villains, as they rode through—sometimes in a smart trot—seemed to take particular delight in rattling their mess-kettles, clanking their sabres, and shouting forth snatches of song, as if in defiance of any genius that might be supposed guarding the place. Having dispatched our breakfast, and "saddled up," we sallied forth to renew our journey at an early hour. As I had discretionary power to leave the wagon train, whenever I might think it secure, I abandoned it at this point—twenty-eight miles from Jalapa—and pushed on with my twenty Tennessee rifles. Nothing could be more delightful than the fresh and balmy morning air, as we commenced ascending the first range of hills. The rain of the preceding evening had laid the dust, and there being still a canopy of clouds in the heavens to protect us from the fierce rays of the sun, we had an agreeable ride of several hours. Santa

Anna certainly displayed taste in selecting the Puente Nacional as the site of one of his residences. Its elevation is sufficient to temper somewhat the heat of the *tierras calientes*, and it is within an easy day's ride of Vera Cruz. It is directly on the great thoroughfare to the city of Mexico; is surrounded by the beautiful and picturesque scenery of the Antigua, at its most interesting point; and has a cultivated region sufficiently near it, to be within reach of abundant supplies. The military chieftain, from this point, could overlook and command, as it were, both the sea-board and the interior.

The country over which we were riding was gently undulating, with occasionally an abrupt hill. Cultivation there was none to be seen. Dense thickets of thorn, cactus, and bramble, covered the hill sides and valleys, and were the only vegetation. The dry and rainy seasons, in this portion of the republic, are most distinctly marked. It was now the latter part of the dry season, and the rank weeds and grass lay as dead as though a frost had passed over them. All vegetation, indeed, seemed as completely suspended as it is with us, in our northern states, in the winter season—the stunted trees and shrubs being nearly all divested of their leaves, and apparently struggling for mere existence. Presently the rains will commence, and as the soil, even in this region of the boundless chapparal, is rich and productive, under the joint influences of heat and moisture, a new life will be given to the vegetable kingdom, and nature will assume once more her garniture of the glossy leaf and the green grass.

A few miles from the Puente Nacional, we ascended the *Cuesta de la Calera*—Height of the Lime-kiln—from the top of which, we had an extensive and beautiful view of the surrounding country. We could trace, many leagues away toward the sea, the windings of the Antigua, and we, more than once, caught a view of the sea itself, as the fog, which was lying in wreaths along the horizon, occasionally lifted in that direction. The mountains, with their serrated outlines and fantastic shapes, and robed in their accustomed azure, were now quite distinct; notifying us of our approach to those fabled highlands which had witnessed the exploits of Cortez, and on the first slopes of which our own gallant army lay encamped. But the scene was one of perfect wildness; inanimate

nature alone being visible. There was no habitation or cultivated spot to be seen, in any direction, and nothing to remind us of our species, but the magnificent causeway on which we stood. This, like the Puente Nacional, was the work of the celebrated consulate of Vera Cruz, of which I have made mention in a former page, and like most of the elaborate masonry one encounters on the road to Mexico, is gradually tumbling into ruin, without any attempt, on the part of the government, to arrest or remedy the decay. But I mistake; there was another sight to remind us of our species; for near the top of the height lay the blackened corpse of a soldier, in the uniform of our infantry regiments. He lay extended on his back, to all appearance just as he had fallen from the parapet of the causeway, where he had probably seated himself to rest, after straggling from his company, and where he had been murdered by some *ranchero*. He had been shot through the head by a musket ball. This foul sight exasperated my volunteers to such a degree, that I believe they would have had recourse to fearful retaliation, had any unfortunate Mexicans been fallen in with, before their angry mood had been somewhat appeased.

Henceforth, we began to meet, more frequently, the signs of war on the road. The miserable huts of the natives were all deserted—their late occupants having run off in great alarm at the approach of the terrible *voluntarios* of General Scott's army, who, they had been taught to believe, were a sort of devils incarnate, thirsting for human blood. I frequently had occasion, while in Mexico, to observe the terror with which the name "volunteer" inspired the inhabitants generally, and particularly the more ignorant lower classes; arising, no doubt, from the fact that this description of troops was under less discipline than the regular regiments; and as a consequence, committed more excesses upon the population. At Vera Cruz, there had been some shameful outrages committed, which General Scott found it necessary to reprove very severely in general orders. These outrages, bad as they were, had, no doubt, been much exaggerated, and accounts of them spread broadcast through the land by Mexican letter-writers, interested in making us appear as odious as possible. But to continue our journey. Dead horses and mules, and the carcasses of cattle, slain for the subsistence of the army, lay

strewed along the road; and now and then, a blackened spot showed where a hut had been recently burned.

Thirteen miles from *Puente Nacional* is Plan del Rio, which we reached about eleven o'clock. This is another of the passes which guard the great highway to the city of Mexico. The road runs through a ravine for some distance, as it descends toward the river, and passes the latter on a substantial stone bridge—which was afterward, in order to cut off our communication with Vera Cruz, blown up by the enemy. A small fortification, placed on an eminence beyond the river, enfiladed this bridge, and the road was also commanded by a series of almost inaccessible heights. It was here our army encamped, for a few days, previous to the battle of Cerro Gordo; General Twiggs, whose division (the second division of regulars) led the advance from Vera Cruz, arriving on the 11th of April, and the battle taking place on the 18th. Just after crossing the stream, a small plain or river bottom—hence the name, *Plan del Rio*—is formed by the receding of the mountains, on either side of the road; and in this plain, the advance encamped to await the arrival of the other divisions, and of the general-in-chief. As the army marched without tents—there being but three allowed to each company—and almost without baggage, in consequence of the deficiency of the means of transportation, it had been obliged to construct for itself temporary arbors or sheds, composed of the branches of trees. These were still standing, as memorials of the privations it had undergone, on the eve of its great victory. To clear the campground, it had been necessary to burn several huts, and their blackened remains lay scattered on both sides of the road. Several heavy field-pieces, which the enemy had apparently brought hither for the purpose of making a stand, but which he afterward abandoned, were lying, spiked, in the road, with their carriages destroyed. It was here our hospital was established, during, and immediately after the battle; and a number of newly-made graves on the left of the road, showed where such of the wounded as had died after being borne from the field of battle, had been buried. The poor fellows who tenanted them had already been forgotten; there being no mark by which one grave could be distinguished from another. The shout of glory, that had gone up,

in the United States, over the battle of Cerro Gordo, recked not of them. They were of the humble rank and file, who bear the brunt of wars, and are crushed beneath the wheels of the chief-tain's car, to which they are harnessed!

A few of the terrified inhabitants had returned to their homes at this place, and we were enabled to get a cup of coffee; some of us, more fortunate than the rest, obtained also a *platito* of *olla podrida*. As we always paid for whatever we consumed, the Mexicans on the road sides soon became aware of the fact, and were by no means loth to turn an honest penny, when occasion offered. The poor devils waited on us, on this occasion, however, with manifest fear and trembling—they must have known from the *cut of their jibs*, that my fellows were volunteers—not being sure, but that at any moment, a rap over the head with a sabre, might settle all accounts with them. We did not delay here many minutes, but pushed on, being anxious to reach the battleground.

The pass of Cerro Gordo is four miles from Plan del Rio. Immediately upon leaving the "Plan," the road begins to ascend, winding its way through a narrow defile of the mountains. On the left, it is flanked and commanded for two miles, before reaching the hill of Cerro Gordo, which lies on the right of the road, at the upper end of the pass, by an almost inaccessible ridge, rising to the height of eight hundred feet. On the right it is alternately shut in by heights, and skirted by a dense chapparal. The enemy had fortified himself on the ridge on the left, and on the hill of Cerro Gordo; and had beside, established two batteries across the road—one at the head of the pass, near the base of Cerro Gordo, and another farther up the road, in the direction of Jalapa. His fortifications on the height on the left, consisted of a series of breastworks, armed with cannon, and so arranged as to command the road—enfilading it in many places—and each other, in succession; so that in the event of the first battery's being taken, the next in order might be opened upon it; and so *toties quoties*. In front of these batteries, along the slope of the height, timber was felled, and other obstructions thrown in the way of storming parties. This position could not be flanked by the left, as the river of the Plan wound its way along the base of the ridge in that

direction—the ridge thus forming, as it were, a tongue between the road on one side and the river on the other. It was necessary, therefore, either that our army should pass up the road, thus commanded, or flank it by the right.

A march by the road, and an attack in front, against such formidable defenses, placed as these were, in positions almost inaccessible, was not to be thought of, of course. It remained therefore to be seen, whether it were possible to execute a flank movement, by the right. General Twiggs, having arrived at Plan del Rio, as before remarked, on the 11th—Colonel Harney, of the dragoons, who was in advance, brushing away a body of the Mexican lancers—commenced his reconnoissance the next day.—To cover this reconnoissance effectually, he moved forward his whole division, to within half a mile of the enemy's first batteries. Having examined the ground in person, as well as by his engineers and aids-de-camp, he resolved upon pretty much the same plan of attack, which he afterward carried out so brilliantly, under the orders of General Scott. His Adjutant-General, Brooke, having discovered and partially explored a trail, to the right of the road, it was seen that by widening and clearing this trail a little, the flank movement by the right would not only be practicable, but quite easy of accomplishment. General Twiggs, believing himself strong enough to execute this movement, alone, resolved on attacking the enemy's position on the 13th; but Generals Pillow and Shields, of General Patterson's division, joining him on the evening of the 12th, with their respective brigades—much fagged and worn by the march from Vera Cruz—and expressing a desire to take part in the battle, he deferred his attack until the 14th. But on the evening of the 13th, General Patterson, who was bringing up the rear of his division, sent him an order to suspend all further operations until the arrival of the general-in-chief. Thus matters stood, when General Scott arrived, on the 15th. On the evening of the 16th, this officer gave verbal orders to General Twiggs, to proceed on his line of operations, on the right of the road, with the view of gaining the enemy's rear. The Cerro Gordo, or Big Hill, called by the Mexicans, in their dispatches, *El Telegrafo*, is an immense hill, of a conical form, rising to the height of near a thousand feet. It stands, as I have



said, at the head of the pass, to which it gives its name, and formed the extreme left (our right) of the fortifications of the enemy. It was surrounded by two breastworks, one near the base, and the other near the summit, and was defended by eight pieces of artillery—18s and 6s—and a numerous body of infantry. By its superior elevation, it commanded all the rest of the enemy's works, and might be regarded as the key to his whole position.

On the morning of the 17th, General Twiggs, in obedience to the orders he had received the night before, put his division in motion. As you proceed up the pass, the road makes a bend, northward, just before you reach the enemy's first batteries on the left. Near this point, the trail discovered by Adjutant-General Brooke diverges to the right. The division, formed in column, took this trail. About eleven o'clock, the column being in position, some seven hundred yards from the enemy's main works, Lieutenant Gardner, with a company of the 7th Infantry, was detached to occupy the crest of a hill to the left, to observe the enemy's movements. While in the execution of this order, he became engaged with a picket of the enemy, which, although much his superior in numbers, he maintained himself against, until he was reinforced and relieved by the regiment of mounted riflemen—now dismounted—under Major Sumner, and the 1st Artillery, under Lieutenant-Colonel Childs. The enemy being also reinforced, to the number of something like two thousand men, a severe conflict ensued; our troops driving the enemy from his first position, and pursuing him to a second hill, nearer the key-fortress of Cerro Gordo, where he made another stand. This hill was within grape and canister range of the enemy's batteries; and in the storming which ensued, our troops suffered severely. They nevertheless carried it gallantly, and held it in spite of all the enemy's efforts to dislodge them. A portion of the troops, under the lead of Lieutenant-Colonel Childs, hurried on by their enthusiasm, rushed down the hill, and gained the foot of the Cerro Gordo itself, where they effected a lodgment, and kept up a fire of musketry on the enemy's lines, until they were recalled—it not being intended to make the main attack until the next day. This gallant feat was performed by about sixty men of the 1st Artillery, under captains Nauman, Burke, and Capron, and

lieutenants Hoskins and Brannan, and a few riflemen under Lieutenant Gibbs. Captain Magruder, also effected a lodgment on another part of the hill, with but ten men, retaining his position in like manner, until recalled. The Rifles and 7th Infantry slept on the second hill, which they had stormed; and when the roll was called, that night, many a brave fellow was missing from the ranks. To this point were brought, during the night, with infinite toil, a twenty-four-pounder, and two twenty-four-pound howitzers; which were dragged by main strength up the hill, and planted on its summit. An eight-inch howitzer was also placed in position across the river, and opposite to the enemy's advanced battery on the right, by Major Burnham, New York volunteers. The piece was served, the next day, by Lieutenant Ripley, 2d Artillery.— This was the condition of things at the close of the first day's operations. General Santa Anna believing, or affecting to believe, that we had already made our main attack, sent off couriers in haste, to announce his having beaten us at Cerro Gordo.

General Scott, being informed of General Twiggs' movements, and of the positions he had gained, drew up his order of battle for the next day, dated at his head-quarters, at Plan del Rio, four miles in the rear. In this order, with great delicacy and tact, he seems to have intrusted the *modus operandi*, in all its details, to his gallant and skillful subordinates. He directed General Twiggs to "move forward before daylight, to-morrow, and take a position across the national road, in the enemy's rear, so as to cut off his retreat toward Jalapa." This was to be the main movement of the day; in fact, the battle to be offered to the enemy. While General Twiggs should be thus flanking the enemy, by the right, General Pillow was directed to "march, at six o'clock, to-morrow morning, along the route he has carefully reconnoitered, and stand ready, as soon as he hears the report of arms on our right—or sooner if circumstances should favor him—to pierce the enemy's line of batteries at such point—the nearer the river the better—as he may select. Once in the rear of that line, he will turn to the right or left, or both, and attack the batteries in reverse; or, if abandoned, he will pursue the enemy with vigor until further orders." We thus see, that the whole plan of the battle, as detailed in general orders, amounted to this:

that General Twiggs should flank and beat the enemy on the right, and General Pillow on the left; the precise points of attack, and other details being left discretionary with the generals. The confidence of the commander-in-chief was not misplaced.

General Twiggs' division consisted of two brigades. The 1st brigade, under the temporary command of Colonel Harney—Brevet Brigadier-General Smith being sick—was composed of the 1st regiment of Artillery, Lieutenant-Colonel Childs; the Rifle regiment, successively under majors Sumner and Loring; and the 7th Infantry, under Colonel Plympton. The 2d brigade was commanded by Colonel Riley, and was composed of the 4th regiment of Artillery, under Major Gardner; the 2d Infantry, under Captain Morris; and the 3d Infantry, under Captain Alexander. On the night of the 17th, this division was reinforced by General Shields, whose brigade consisted of the 3d Illinois regiment, under Colonel Foreman; the 4th Illinois regiment, under Colonel Baker; and the New York regiment, under Colonel Burnett. General Twiggs' order of movement and battle was as follows, viz: General Shields and Colonel Riley were to flank the enemy's right, and place themselves in the Jalapa road, some distance in the rear of Cerro Gordo, while Colonel Harney, with his brigade, reinforced by the 3d Infantry—drawn from Colonel Riley's brigade—was to storm the height of Cerro Gordo itself. We are informed by General Scott, in his dispatch, that he *suggested* this latter movement to General Twiggs.

General Pillow's brigade consisted of four regiments of infantry, viz: the 1st and 2d Tennessee, and the 1st and 2d Pennsylvania regiments, and a detachment of Tennessee horse, and a company of Kentucky volunteers, under Captain Williams. He divided this force into two storming parties, each being supported by a strong reserve; and his plan of attack, was to assail simultaneously, the angles of the enemy's batteries, Nos. 1 and 2, near his extreme right. Colonel Haskell—2d Tennessee—and Colonel Wynkoop—1st Pennsylvania—were to command the assaulting columns, and to be supported by Colonel Campbell—1st Tennessee—and Colonel Roberts—2d Pennsylvania. Thus, to sum up briefly, we have the enemy fortified in a mountain-pass of two miles in length—his batteries being perched on a height, extending

in a curve, more or less regular, to the head of the pass, where the road debouches between this height, which here terminates, and the opposite height of Cerro Gordo. His forces amount to about seven thousand men—General Santa Anna says less—ours to about nine thousand effectives. But then, he fights behind breastworks, and on the tops of rugged heights, and we have to clamber up these heights and drive him from his fastnesses. General Twiggs is in possession of a hill near Cerro Gordo, on which he has planted some cannon, and holds his division in hand for a forward movement; and General Pillow is marshaling for the assault, on the enemy's extreme right. There is a force held in reserve at the foot of the pass, and General Worth has orders to follow and support General Twiggs, if necessary.—Early on the morning of the 18th, our guns on the hill opened upon the enemy; and Colonel Harney, pushing forward Major Loring, with the Rifles, along the ravine to the left of his position, to engage the enemy in that quarter, and hold him in check, in case he should attempt to reinforce Cerro Gordo, moved forward with the remainder of his command to the assault of the latter. The Rifles, in taking up their position, were exposed to a murderous fire of grape and canister, but Major Loring executed his orders with steadiness and courage. Colonel Harney's column was also frequently under fire before it reached the base of the work to be assaulted. The way was exceedingly rough, through a tangled growth of mountain shrubbery, and over rocks and chasms. As the column approached the foot of Cerro Gordo, it was met by a rapid and well-directed fire of grape and canister, which cut down many of our brave fellows. The command was here formed into two columns preparatory to storming; the 7th Infantry on the right, and the 3d Infantry on the left, and the 1st Artillery in the rear of both, with orders to support them. Owing to the distance the men had passed over—it being near two miles—and the nature of the ground, they were already fatigued, before they commenced the ascent of the height—which, as viewed from the road below, appears almost inaccessible—and consequently there was no rush—no confusion. The gallant fellows, led and encouraged by their gallant officers, moved on to the work before them, with the steadiness and regularity of a parade. As they became

1

exhausted from time to time, by the fatigue of the ascent, they halted for a few moments—the enemy, all the while, pouring down upon them a deluge of destructive missiles—to regain their breath, and then moved on as before. The first breastwork, about sixty yards from the foot of the hill, was filled with infantry; and as our men advanced without the least shelter, the destruction of life was terrible for a few minutes. But we soon carried it; the enemy crossing bayonets with us for a moment or two—a very unusual occurrence in this war. Notwithstanding this successful storming of the breastwork below, the enemy continued to pour down upon us an animated fire from above, and showed every sign of an obstinate resistance. But Colonel Harney, nothing daunted, recommenced the steep ascent; and when within a few paces of the second breastwork, his men, with a shout that resounded far away over the valley, rushed into it with clubbed muskets, and soon made themselves masters of the entire hill; unfurling from the Mexican flag-staff our magnificent stars and stripes, as a signal to the rest of the army of their success. In the meantime, General Shields and Colonel Riley, with their respective brigades, had been dispatched to continue General Twiggs' flank movement, and thus, turning the enemy's whole position, to gain his rear in the Jalapa road. This movement was also handsomely executed, under the guidance of Captain Lee, of Engineers. As General Shields was about to debouch upon the main road, a battery of five guns, hitherto undiscovered, and supported by a body of lancers, opened upon him, with grape-shot. The gallant general immediately ordered a charge, and pushing forward briskly, at the head of his men, drove the enemy from his guns, and effected a lodgment in the road—not, however, until he had been, as it was thought at the time, mortally wounded. A large body of the enemy had withdrawn to this point, General Santa Anna among the rest, with the view of making their escape, in the contingency which had occurred. They immediately abandoned themselves to flight, and were pursued by Worth's and Twiggs' divisions, within sight of Jalapa.

While these operations were going on, on the enemy's left, General Pillow must not be lost sight of, on his right. This general, when he became aware that Twiggs was engaged, had

moved up a storming party under Colonel Haskell, of the 2d Tennesseans, and Colonel Wynkoop, of the 1st Pennsylvanians, to execute his portion of the plan of attack. Colonel Haskell, whose regiment was the first to move, was unfortunately discovered by the enemy before he could place himself in position, preparatory to a charge; and being fired upon by grape and canister, it became necessary, either that he should fall back under cover, without executing his orders, or rush forward unsupported and unorganized. He gallantly, but unwisely, chose the latter alternative, and dashed forward, at the head of his men, into the open space in front of the batteries. Unfortunately, this space, for the distance of three hundred yards, was covered with the brush of a chaparral, which had been cut down and suffered to remain, rendering it very difficult to advance. In addition to this, a battery of six or seven guns, which had been previously masked, suddenly blew a cloud of brush into the air, as it opened upon him, and began to cut down his men in a fearful manner. He was of necessity obliged to recoil, and fell back in good order under shelter, leaving behind him many killed. General Pillow, while organizing his attack, and bringing up his column, was wounded. Before the storming parties could be again brought into position, this officer, finding the enemy's fire slacken on the right, and justly supposing the battle to be ended, by the reversal of his position in that quarter, suspended further offensive operations. The enemy had, in fact, been beaten, and soon afterward displayed a white flag, which General Worth, who had followed close on the heels of Harney, observing—General Scott had not yet come up—he sent colonels Harney and Childs to hold a parley with the enemy, which resulted in his total surrender.

Thus was fought and won the battle of Cerro Gordo, which, barring one or two mistakes, was calculated to reflect, and did reflect, much luster upon our arms. One of these mistakes was the assault of Pillow, which should never have been permitted, as it was wholly unnecessary; and being unnecessary, the loss which ensued, was a useless and cruel sacrifice of human life. We are told, in the dispatches, that it was intended as a diversion, and to hold the enemy in check; but from the general order of the 17th, it seems to have been intended as a real, and not a feigned attack.

General Pillow is instructed to pierce the enemy's batteries, and then turn upon him, right and left, and *reverse* his remaining works. If this language meant anything, it meant that a veritable assault was intended.

If Pillow's operation had been confined to a feint, to call off the enemy's attention from the main movement, it would have been very proper; but to have directed or permitted him to assault works in front, which, beside being inaccessible, were of Gibraltar-like strength, as a mere incident of the main attack, was plainly a great mistake, as the result proved. The whole army was mortified at this feature of the battle, and no men more so, than the brave Tennesseans, who were forced to give ground (a thing so painful to the American soldier), after having been almost cut to pieces.

We have seen that the Rifles, under Major Loring, effectually cut off all reinforcements from the enemy's right; and if Pillow's brigade had been added to this force, we should have had men enough concentrated at this point, to have offered battle to the whole Mexican army, in any attempt it might have made to force its way to the relief of Cerro Gordo. This disposition of Pillow would, perhaps, have been still better than permitting him to make a feint. The placing of two or three pieces of artillery in position to "batter" the enemy's works (skillfully constructed, and armed with forty pieces of cannon), seems to have been as useless as laborious; especially as our metal was the lightest. I make these remarks with great distrust of my own judgment, and without any design to detract, in the least, from the well-earned fame of the generals implicated; but it sometimes happens, that military men, for want of proper reconnoissances before a battle, make mistakes, which they are the first to see, themselves, upon a closer inspection of the ground, after the battle has been fought. These may be mistakes of this kind; at all events, I but give them to the reader for what they are worth.

I reached the pass with my Tennesseans, just fifteen days after the battle, while the blood of the slain was still reeking from the soil, and spent some time in riding over the different localities, and tracing out the *locus in quo* of the most important events. I was amazed at the strength of the whole position, and particu-

larly at the strength of that part of it, which General Pillow had been directed to *pierce* by a front attack. The ground was strewn in every direction with the *debris* of the battle. Artillery spiked and destroyed, broken muskets, with their bayonets, cartridge-boxes and belts, round-shot, and grape and canister—many of the latter of copper—lay in promiscuous piles, as they had been left by our army. Caps and feathers, and other fragments of military dress, told where the unfortunate had fallen, and been left a prey to the vulture and the wolf. While my volunteers were looking over the heights on one side of the road, with that pride which Americans might be supposed to feel on such an occasion, a few poor Mexicans were groveling, on the opposite heights, for such articles of small value as they could glean from the wreck. Poor wretches, I could not help pitying them!

From the top of the Sierra, on the left, the spectator surveys the broken and rugged country for many miles around, and beholds the blue mountains of Jalapa. The little stream of Plan del Rio, whose course among the hills may be traced as far as the eye can reach, winding its tortuous way toward the sea, passes immediately beneath his feet, at the bottom of a sheer precipice, of five or six hundred feet.

A black cloud or two rising in the south-east, and the distant rumble of thunder warning us of the probability of a wet jacket, we turned the heads of our horses northward, and bidding adieu to the wild scenery of the "Pass of Cerro Gordo," henceforth to be associated with the fame of our arms, and the progress of our race, continued our journey. It is eighteen or twenty miles from Cerro Gordo to Jalapa; and the whole of this distance we rode through a drizzling rain, looking more like Mexican lancers, with our broad-brimmed oil-cloth hats, and many-colored blankets or serapes, which we had provided for such occasions, than American cavalry. The ascent is continuous, and the road, most of the way, a heavy, paved turnpike, broken into holes and gullies, in many places, by the torrents of the rainy season. Fear and distrust were pictured in the countenance of every Mexican we met, and the huts on the road side were, as before, nearly all deserted. While ascending one of the hills, we met a man, his wife and one other woman, descending to their home at the Plan. They were







nearly naked, and the only property which they carried, was a pet dog, which the wife held in her arms, and clasped as tenderly to her bosom as though it had been her infant. We spoke kindly to them, to allay their fears, and told them they might pass on without further dread of the *voluntarios*. They were simple Indians.

The same barren, thorny aspect of the country which I have described several pages back, accompanied us for some ten miles, as far as the *Corral Falso*—a small collection of huts. Beyond this, the country opened a little into field and meadow, and the grass began to give evidence of a ranker growth in the preceding year, and of the distant approach of the rainy season—now and then a green blade shooting up from among the withered fern. We saw here, for the first time, a stone fence, although the country, all the way from the small village of Santa Fé to this place, abounds in the material; the lazy Indians of the *tierras calientes*, preferring to picket in their little patches of plantain and banana with crooked sticks of the thorn, and other stunted growth of the chapparal. Seven miles before reaching Jalapa, we arrived at Encerro, another of the estates of Santa Anna. Here, as at Puente Nacional and Mango de Clavo, he has built himself a splendid country mansion, and surrounded himself by the comforts and luxuries of a country gentleman. He owns thousands of acres of the excellent grazing lands that lie in this neighborhood, and is a sort of feudatory among the Indian population, who herd their cattle on his estates, at a given compensation per head. The Encerro is the boundary between the *tierras calientes*, and the uplands of Mexico. The yellow fever has never been known to originate beyond this limit.

Crossing a small brook that winds its way through the valley, and becomes a picturesque stream a short distance below, we commenced a steep ascent, that gave us an extensive view of the surrounding scenery. Forests of small trees, among which we recognized the oak, began now to appear, and the general aspect of the country reminded me of that of our middle states. As we advanced toward Jalapa, a rapid and magical change came over the landscape, resembling more the scenic effect produced in a theater, than a natural transition. The thorn, cactus, and other denizens of the chapparal disappear. The hill sides no longer, as

in the *tierra caliente*, presenting their nakedness to the sun, are covered with a luxuriant growth of tree, and shrub, and plant, all arrayed in the richest and deepest tints of green. Cultivation is seen on every hand, and neat, white cottages, with their waving fields of corn, plantain and banana, dot the landscape. Limpid streams of the purest water, descending fresh from the Cordilleras, which latter seem to embrace, as it were, and smile down upon the favored spot, meander through the valleys; and fruit trees and flowers complete one of the most charming pictures which the imagination of a Claude Lorraine could conceive. For two miles before entering the town, the road was flanked, on either side, by continuous hedges of shrubs, and wild vines; both loaded with flowers; and although the day was gloomy and wet, they were vocal with the song of birds; our own superb mocking-bird among the number. While this wilderness of beauty delighted the eye, and gave wings to the imagination, the air came to us loaded with the most delicious of perfumes. My Tennesseans seemed to be perfectly absorbed by the novelty of the picture; and although I had beheld it before, I too, enjoyed it with a keen relish, heightened by the effect of contrast; as the mind naturally compared it with the arid and sterile desert we had so recently left behind us. The *coup d'œil* of Jalapa, as it first strikes the beholder from an eminence in the road, is beautiful and picturesque in the extreme. I cannot describe it better than by comparing it to a delicate mosaic set in a massive frame of emerald. No pencil could have made it more picture-like than it was. It sat embowered among the hills, in a wilderness of shrubbery, amid which the tall and graceful palm, with its feathery foliage, was conspicuous; giving it the air of a city of the east. So much of peace and beauty was there in this picture, as we checked our horses in the drizzling rain, to gaze on it for a moment, that we could scarcely realize the fact, that grim-visaged war had here made his home. Our troops had taken possession of it some two weeks before; and the proud stars and stripes now hung with dripping folds, from the flag-staff of the government-house. We entered the town late in the afternoon, and much fatigued by our day's journey, as we had ridden all the way from the Puente Nacional, and been twelve hours in the saddle.

## CHAPTER X.

**DESCRIPTION** of Jalapa—The market-place—The multitude, and their costumes—The American volunteer—The luxuriance of vegetation—The peculiarity of the climate—It rains more than half the year—The exceeding transparency of the atmosphere—The baths—The washing establishments—The lavaderos and the soldiers—The author's quarters, and new messmates—Correspondence with General Scott—Arrival of Mr. Trist, as commissioner—A funeral ceremony—Captain Mason of the rifles, and the sympathy occasioned by his death.

IN the two weeks of our occupation, Jalapa had become almost *Americanized*. Already did the busy "press," that pioneer of civilization, throw off its thousand sheets of American newspapers. Hotels, and shops filled with merchandise—the publican and shopkeeper had followed the army; Brother Jonathan liking to try his hand at a little trade as well as glory—with sign-boards in broad Anglo-Saxon, were to be seen in all the streets, and even the daguerreotype man was giving permanence to the fleeting beauties of the fair Jalapeñas. The streets were blocked up by wagons, horsemen, and foot passengers, presenting a motley crowd of Americans and Mexicans—the former swaggering with lighted cigars in their mouths, or squirting their tobacco juice from side to side, and the latter worming their way timidly between, and around their more robust conquerors. Our teamsters and volunteer horsemen were the constant themes of admiration among the natives—the men with their stalwart limbs, unshaven and uncombed beards and hair, slouchy dress, and devil-may-care air, presenting no mean personifications of the barbarians whom they believed them to be—and the horses, by contrast with their little barbs, seeming to be weird steeds, befitting only such gigantic and uncouth riders.

The market-place—not market-house; there are no market-houses in Mexico—at the convergence of several streets, where the supplies of the finest fruits and vegetables did not seem to be

at all diminished by the presence of several thousand additional mouths, was crowded all day long, by horse and foot soldiers and citizens, old and young, some lounging and chatting idly, for mere pastime, and others chaffering and trading with the country people—the whole presenting a most novel and picturesque *tableau vivants*. With primitive simplicity, the Indian women seated themselves on the paved streets, having beneath them a *petate*, or country mat, and spreading out, in little piles around them, their varieties of fruits and vegetables, and homely cooking and other utensils of domestic manufacture, would wait, with true Indian patience, the whole day, if necessary, until their humble stock-in-trade was disposed of. Close by stood the patient *burro*—ass—with his immense panniers on either side, munching a few blades of *sacate*—leaves of green Indian corn—and waiting as philosophically for the period of his release, as his mistress. Cosily seated beside these women, making awkward attempts to speak a few words of the language, were to be seen the lusty volunteers, regaling themselves on whatever struck their fancy, and occasionally damning the “*lingo*” whenever they failed to make themselves understood.

Not the least interesting point of this picture, were the costumes of the masses here assembled. Chemise and petticoat—the latter frequently fancifully colored, and not coming so low, but that the ankle and part of the leg were visible, formed the only dress of the Indian women, in this delightful region, where dress was almost unnecessary. The petticoat was drawn, or gathered in ample folds about the hips, while the arms, and frequently the breast also, remained *au naturel*. If the female had an infant, this was slung, after a fashion of their own, on her back, where it seemed to repose in perfect *insouciance* and security; she sometimes carried it astride of her hip, if the child were well grown. The clothing of the men consisted of shirt and trousers (generally of coarse cotton cloth, of the manufacture of the country), the latter without suspenders, and confined to the waist by a belt—sometimes of leather, and sometimes, more fancifully, of red or yellow worsted or silk. Machetes, or large knives used for the cutting of sugar-cane, were frequently stuck in these belts, giving the wearer an air of barbarian ferocity.

The costumes of our soldiers were as various as the corps to which they belonged, and almost as various as the individuals of the corps. With their usual independence, they seemed to set all rules of uniformity at defiance. Caps, hats of straw or felt, white or black, coats of all colors, and jackets and trowsers to match, were assumed or thrown off, at the pleasure of the individual wearer. I noticed one fellow, fancifully dressed, or rather undressed, in red flannel shirt and drawers, with a kinky white felt hat stuck jauntily on one side of his head. He was one of our sovereigns from the heart of Tennessee or Kentucky, and by his air seemed to regard himself as quite equal to the "old man"—the general-in-chief. Among other persons and things which had followed the army, was a theatrical corps. A theater had already been opened upon my arrival, and every night, Vera Cruz was bombarded, and General Twiggs and Colonel Harney stormed the heights of Cerro Gordo over again. It was attended by a dense throng of soldiers, teamsters and loafers, whose uncouth shouts awakened the echoes of the quaint, and erst, quiet old town, long after the native inhabitants had lost the sense of their misfortunes in sleep.

The population of Jalapa is estimated at between five and six thousand, and some of the best families of Mexico reside here. Many of the wealthy and intelligent merchants of Vera Cruz find here, also, a secure and delightful retreat from the suffocating heats and the vomito of the *tierra caliente*. It being the capital of the State of Vera Cruz, which is one of the largest states of the Mexican confederacy, it is the residence of the governor, whose palace—a large and commodious stone building—was now occupied by General Scott. Many of the residences, without being remarkable for the style of their construction, or architectural adornment, are nevertheless spacious and convenient. They are plainly but substantially built, of a kind of sandstone quarried in the neighboring hills; generally of but a single story, and with large bay-windows, jealously barred and grated, looking out upon, and on a level with, the street. In these windows, the females of the family gather during the day, and laugh and chat, and pursue their various domestic occupations, with primitive simplicity, in full view of all the passers-by, and without being,

in the least degree, disturbed by the prying eye of curiosity. Flowers, in great profusion, adorn windows and balconies, and form tiny bowers, in which the fairer flowers of flesh and blood partially conceal themselves, and through which, mingled with their odor, the most delightful music of harp or guitar sometimes steals into the streets. Every house has, beside, its flower-garden, and Flora seems to hold here her festival all the year round.

Jalapa is celebrated for its pretty women; but it cannot compare, in this respect, with any town of the same size in our own country. Many of the better class had decamped, it is true, upon the approach of our army, but we saw enough of the fair Jalapeñas, to assure us of this fact. They want the fairness and freshness of our women. To be sure, their soft black eyes, that

"Now melt into love, now madden to crime,"

and their hair,

"Whose glossy black would bring  
Shame to the raven's wing,"

are beautiful features; but nothing can compensate, in female beauty, for the absence of the lily and the rose. The Jalapeñas are sprightly in conversation, and easy, and eminently graceful in their manners; and these are charms which not only enhance beauty of person, but even compensate for its absence. A witty and graceful woman may be plain, at first sight, but she cannot long remain plain. It struck me as somewhat remarkable, that while the women were, in general, sufficiently robust in figure, and well developed, the men were puny and delicate looking. Robust mothers should produce robust children; but the rule does not seem to hold good in Jalapa.

The town being built on a series of hills, the scene, as you pass through its abrupt and sometimes precipitous streets, is ever changing. From the busy site of trade and barter, you pass, in a few minutes, into dells and recesses, where all is as quiet as a country village. The environs of the town are even more lovely than the town itself. The streets lead, in almost every direction, into avenues hedged on both sides by magnificent forest trees, of strange and rich foliage; many of the trees being entangled with creepers bearing a profusion of white and scarlet flowers,



from which the merry choristers of the woods pour forth their melody all day long. In my rides in the neighborhood, as I have wound round the bases of the hills, in this wilderness of vegetation, I have sometimes come abruptly upon valleys and vistas of such surpassing beauty, that I have found myself checking my horse unawares, to gaze upon the lovely picture. From a height north of the town, the view is extended far over the valley; and the panorama, which presents itself from this point, is so picture-like, that no mere words are adequate to give the reader even a faint conception of it. And the panorama is equally perfect, of its kind, whether viewed beneath the rays of a brilliant sun, or seen through the wreaths of mist and cloud, which settle over the landscape almost every day, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, during the rainy season. In the early morning, even during this season, there is scarcely ever a cloud to be seen in the heavens. The air is pure and elastic, and so perfectly transparent in this elevated portion of the torrid zone, that space seems to be annihilated. Orizaba is fifty miles distant from Jalapa, and yet so near does it seem, that you are tempted to give the rein to your horse, in the expectation of reaching it in half an hour. I could never accustom myself to this optical illusion, and gazed upon this magnificent feature of the landscape with renewed wonder, every day, during my stay. The sea too, although forty miles distant, in a bee-line, may be seen, in a favorable state of the atmosphere, from the point of view I have been describing.

Jalapa has a most agreeable and equable climate. Its elevation, four thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea, protects it from the heats of the *tierra caliente*, while its latitude secures it against the frosts of our winters. Upon first reaching it from the low country, the mornings and evenings are occasionally unpleasantly cool, but after a few days' residence, one becomes accustomed to the change, his step becomes more elastic, and it is a positive pleasure to breathe the pure and bracing atmosphere. The climate is very humid—it raining constantly (after about one o'clock in the day), during the rainy season—five or six months, from June until October—and frequently during the remainder of the year. The cause of this humidity is very obvious. The sea-breeze, or south-easterly winds of the Gulf, sweeping

over the arid plains of the *tierra caliente*, become highly rarefied, and charged with moisture; and coming here first in contact with the mountains, they find their dew-point at about this elevation. Their condensation and dispersion in rain is, of course, the consequence. It is this peculiarity of position, that gives to the landscape of Jalapa its luxuriance of vegetation, and that vivid green coloring to the foliage, for which it is remarkable. The equability of temperature has a favorable effect upon the health of the population. Although, as remarked, the vegetation is luxuriant in the extreme, its decay is so gradual, that fevers are rare. The most common diseases are catarrhs, which, however, are quite mild, and rarely degenerate into consumptions. Longevity is common—many old people being met with in the streets.

One of the first luxuries in which I indulged after my arrival at Jalapa, was a bath. To reach the bathing establishment, which is situated on a hill-side, in the lower part of the town, you pass under a low archway of brick, leading through a row of houses, and emerge into a splendid flower-garden; from which, amid the agreeable shade of trees and shrubs, and the perfume of the rose and other flowers, you look forth upon the country beyond, and upon the ever-present and sublime Orizaba. Around this flower-garden are arranged the bath-houses—neat little rooms, with baths of masonry, inlaid with the fanciful Dutch tile. Into these is let the sparkling water, which abounds everywhere through the city, in such proportions of warm and cold, as the bather may desire. While the *mozo* is preparing your bath, you pluck a bouquet to carry with you into the bath-room, or amuse yourself listening to the merry voices of the female bathers, who go in, in small parties of three or four at a time—the female bathing rooms being somewhat larger than the others—and disport themselves, if one may judge by the ear, like so many naiads or water-nymphs. A couch, clean linen, and other appliances—including a cup of coffee and a cigar, if you desire them—invite you to repose after the luxurious operation of the bath. When you have had your nap, which every man, with the least pretension to civilization, is expected to take, and dreamed of Mahomet and his houris, you sally forth from this Hesperides, a new man. This establishment was in great vogue, during the time I remained

in Jalapa; crowds of officers resorting to it every day, especially those who had just arrived, as I had done, from a hot and dusty journey through the *tierra caliente*. While we are speaking of water, I must not omit to mention, what to me was a great novelty—the washing establishment of Jalapa. If the reader will imagine one of our market-houses situated in the most lovely of tiny ravines, in the heart of the city, and with a stream of crystal water running through it, he will have a pretty good idea of this *lavandero*, as it is called in the sonorous Spanish. In each stall is a large flat stone, for the use of the washerwoman, sufficiently elevated to render the operation of washing upon it quite easy. The stalls are let out to the different families for a trifling sum—sufficient to keep the building in repair—each washerwoman occupying her stone for a week, when a new letting takes place. Hither, on wash-days, resort a promiscuous crowd of women and girls, of all ages and complexions, clad in their particolored petticoats, and with bare feet and arms; each one laden with the dirty linen of the week, to be cleansed. As washerwomen are chatty all the world over, our soldiers soon found their way to this female Babel, and seemed to be, when I visited it, on capital terms with the inmates; taking lessons in Spanish and love making, while their shirts were being washed! A great improvement was visible, soon after their arrival in Jalapa, in the stiffness and glossy whiteness of their shirt collars, on parade days, and in the general tidiness of their appearance; thus affording another illustration of the words of the poet:

“In peace Love tunes the shepherd’s reed,  
In war he mounts the warrior’s steed,  
In halls in gay attire is seen,  
In hamlets dances on the green;  
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,  
And men below, and saints above,  
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

At the base of the city meanders a small river—a branch of the Chachalás; the river of the “Plan” being another of its branches. Just beyond this, in an extensive plain which stretches toward the south, is the *Alameda*, or public walk, with walls of antique and curiously-wrought masonry on either side, and with

stone benches for the accommodation of loiterers. War, with its alarms, had driven away the fair creatures who had been wont to resort hither ; and we always found it quite deserted, as we visited it of an afternoon, in the hope of meeting some graceful madonna, armed with her mantilla and all-potent fan. Beyond this, again, is one of the most lovely and extensive *sarayeros*, or orange plantations, to be found anywhere in Mexico. A native Jalapeño is the master of this estate ; and with Mexican politeness, he showed us, during an afternoon visit we made him, over his well cultivated grounds. As we walked with him through his stately avenues of orange trees, laden with the young and the ripe fruit at the same time, and interspersed and diversified with other shade and fruit trees, and shrubs and flowers in profusion—the omnipresent campanula, or mammoth white bell-flower, among the rest—I was forcibly reminded of an expression which an old Spaniard had made to me, a day or two before, that "*Jalapa es un pedacito de los cielos, caído en tierra*"—"Jalapa is a small piece of heaven, fallen down to earth." We stopped to refresh ourselves, after our walk, at a picturesque fountain that leaped from the face of a rock, covered with moss and creepers. The water, which came fresh from the mountains, with scarcely increased temperature, gushed forth in a bountiful stream, and after dallying awhile in a splendid marble reservoir, sped away over the meadow, for the use of the stock of the hacienda. From the top and fissures of the craggy precipice sprung large forest trees, casting a dense and perpetual shade over this fountain of the Dryads.

On another occasion we visited the manufactories of Jalapa. The most worthy of note among these, are several extensive factories for the production of cotton goods. These, and other establishments of the kind, have been built up by an excessive tariff of protection, amounting in fact to an exclusion of all foreign competition. A brief account of our visit to one of them will suffice for all ; and I select that of Messrs. Joseph Welsh & Co., an English firm.

The factory buildings are of stone, in good style, and form a pleasing feature in the landscape. Crossing the bridge, over the stream I have described as running along the base of the city, we passed through a gate on the left of the Alameda, and directing

our course over the green sward that skirts the banks of the river, we dismounted from our horses under some fine old shade trees, within a few paces of the buildings; the whirring sound of the machinery, and the hammering in a few workshops in the rear, being the only indications of their character. But for these, we should have taken them, such was their neatness of appearance, and quietude of location, for the villa of some republicanized *hidalgos*. The motive power was water, and the dam, in which some boys were bathing, was neatly hedged in by masonry. The banks were covered with a velvety green-sward, and with shrubbery—objects far too poetic for so common-place an association. The main building was commodiously arranged, and well ventilated, with a profusion of windows, each one of which looked out upon a landscape that might have fired the imagination of a painter. The lower story was devoted to sixty looms, while two thousand spindles were run in the upper, or second story. With the exception of a few foremen, the operatives were Indian females—women and girls of various ages, according to the nature of the occupations required of them. They were neat and cleanly in their persons, had the look of health, and were, some of them, quite fair and pretty. Labor is cheap, food is abundant, and with equal advantages as to the price of the raw material, these Mexican factories might compete with our own in the production of coarse cotton goods; but such is the want of energy in the planter, in raising the raw material, and so completely is all foreign competition excluded, that the few cotton lords who have built up establishments of this kind, put a price three and four-fold greater on their goods, than similar fabrics can be purchased for in the United States.

There is a rivalry, in Mexico, between the planters and manufacturers, on the subject of protection; the elections of members of congress, in particular districts, turn on this point; and the consequence is, that both interests are protected. The government, therefore, is guilty of the absurdity, first, of excluding the foreign manufactured goods, in order that similar fabrics may be produced at home; and secondly, of rendering it impossible that these should be produced, by withholding a supply of the raw material—the Mexican cotton crop never equaling the demand, and some-

times falling short by a third or a half. A beautiful illustration of the system of protection!

On my arrival in Jalapa, I took up my quarters, by invitation, with captains Irwin and Wayne of the quarter-master's department—Captain Irwin being chief quarter-master of General Scott's column. They were living in the custom-house—an establishment for the collection of certain duties of transit, levied on all foreign goods, in addition to the *alcabalas* already paid at the maritime custom-house, where they had been first entered—a commodious but unfurnished stone building, from which a host of Mexican employes had fled in affright after the battle of Cerro Gordo. These gallant gentlemen, in whose mess I continued for three months, and in whose intellectual society I spent many agreeable hours, did all in their power to make me comfortable. I soon paid them the compliment of feeling very much at home, and very much at my ease. Before we left Jalapa, Mr. Louis A. Hargous, a distinguished merchant of Vera Cruz—an American citizen—joined our mess, and contributed to our pleasure and instruction, by his fund of information in relation to the country, and his intimate acquaintance with the Mexican character. These gentlemen will form, henceforth, my *compagnons du voyage*. I had like to have forgotten to introduce to the reader, *Monsieur Auguste*, a distinguished French *artiste*, who having figured in Mr. Hargous' kitchen, had accompanied his master in his campaign, and now had the honor of having charge of our commissariat. Auguste, who dressed like a dandy, wore his sabre, and twirled his moustache at all the pretty girls he met, would have been offended to have been called a *cook*—but he delighted to have us style him an *artiste gastronomique*, as he certainly was. We found him a very important man in the campaign.

I called on General Scott, on the evening of my arrival in Jalapa, and presented him with my letter of credence from Commodore Perry. The general did not appear at all pleased with my mission. He thought it entirely unnecessary, and regretted that Commodore Perry, instead of sending a special messenger, had not written to him on the subject—a word from the commodore would have been sufficient, he said, to have interested him in the fate of Passed-Midshipman Rogers; and finally he doubted

the propriety and policy of having more than one channel of communication with the Mexican government. To all this, I had, of course, but little to reply. I had certain orders from my commander-in-chief to execute, and there was but one course for me to pursue—that pointed out by my instructions. He declined, for the present, giving me an escort to enable me to proceed on my mission, as he had been requested to do by Commodore Perry, but said that I might remain with the army if I chose; and that at some future time, when he should advance nearer to the capital, it would probably be convenient for him to put me in communication with the minister, to whom my dispatches were directed. About this time Mr. N. P. Trist arrived at Vera Cruz, clothed with full powers, as a commissioner, to negotiate a treaty of peace, whenever the Mexican government might be so inclined. It was the intention of the president that this gentleman should accompany the head-quarters of the army, to be ready at any moment to receive such propositions as the enemy might have to offer. General Scott, who had expected to be the negotiator of the peace, as well as the commander of the army which was to “conquer” it, was highly incensed at the appointment of Mr. Trist. He evidently considered that the executive government at Washington, in undertaking any negotiations not intrusted to him, had done him a grievous wrong. At this time, General Taylor had not been nominated for the presidency; and the officers on General Scott’s line had strong hopes of their own chief’s being the successful candidate. There can be but little doubt, that General Scott entertained this hope himself, after the battle of Cerro Gordo, and desired, in imitation of the Mexican chiefs by whom he was surrounded, to step from his camp into the presidency. If he could bring the Mexican war, of which the people were already becoming tired, to a happy conclusion by his arms, and add to the honors of the soldier those of the diplomatist also, he would be enabled, he thought, to enter the convention with a strong prospect of success. I have much admiration for General Scott, as a military man, and I would be understood as speaking of him here, as the politician merely. These political aspirations were not only very pardonable, but very natural, in a man occupying his position, at the head of a victorious army, and with a host of parti-

sans, at home, seeking his advancement—but he suffered his aspirations to become a little too apparent. He treated the new diplomatist, on his arrival at Jalapa, with the utmost disdain. He did not even extend to him the common civility of an official visit; which it was his duty to have done. An angry correspondence ensued between them; and they continued strangers to each other for two months and more, until they were finally reconciled in Puebla, a short time before the advance of the army upon the city of Mexico. Mr. Trist's arrival recalled to the mind of the general my own less important mission. He could not dismiss the ambassador, but he resolved, at least, to get rid of the special messenger. With this view, he sent his aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Williams, to me, to say that I might return to the squadron, as he was resolved not to permit me to hold any communication with the Mexican government, as he was the only proper channel through which any negotiation for the exchange of prisoners, should pass. As the prisoner in whose fate I was interested, was an officer of the naval service, I could not see how the negotiation of his exchange, by an officer of the same service, or the presentation of any demand or threat of the government in relation to him, through the same channel, could be construed into an infringement of the prerogatives of General Scott. I felt it my duty, therefore, to address to the commander-in-chief—after having been denied an interview—the following letter, which will explain itself:

“HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

“*Jalapa, May 8th, 1847.*

“GENERAL:—I understood you to say, in the conversation I had the honor to hold with you, on the evening of my arrival at this place, that although you had no escort then at your command, with which to forward me to the city of Mexico, in the execution of my mission, I might continue with the army in its progress; and that when you should reach some convenient point, near the city, you would either put me in personal communication with the government, or send forward my dispatches. I have this morning been waited upon by Lieutenant Williams, your *aid-de-camp*, who informs me, on your behalf, that you have changed your



resolution on this point, and that you will not permit me to hold any intercourse with the Mexican government. Commodore Perry has been charged, by the president of the United States, to make a communication to the government of Mexico, with the nature of which you have been made acquainted. He has selected me as his agent to carry out the views of the president, and has directed me to apply to you for the means of executing his orders. With regard to the question, as to who is the proper channel through which this communication is to be made, I can, of course, have nothing to say—that must be settled by higher authority ; but the president has thought proper to judge of this for himself, and I am here, by authority of one of the departments (mediately), as his humble agent. I have specific orders from my commander-in-chief, to place, personally (with your assistance), my dispatch in the hands of the minister of foreign relations ; or, if the Mexican government will not permit me to proceed to the capital, in person, to forward it, by some safe conveyance, and await an answer. My object in addressing you this note, is to inquire whether I understand you, as deciding that you will not (at your convenience) afford me the facilities requested of you by Commodore Perry ; and that you will not permit me to hold any intercourse, personal or otherwise, with the Mexican government ? If this be your decision, as a military man, you must see the propriety of giving it to me in writing, in order that I may exhibit it to my commander-in-chief, as a sufficient reason for failing to execute his orders. As soon as I receive this, I shall hold myself in readiness to return to the squadron, by the first conveyance. I inclose, for your inspection, my order in the premises, from Commodore Perry, together with a copy of the dispatch of that officer to the Mexican government ; from which you will be able to see, that my mission cannot have, in the remotest degree, any bearing upon your military operations. I will be obliged to you, if you will return me these papers, after perusal. I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

“ R. SEMMES, Lieut. U. S. Navy.

“ Major-General WINFIELD SCOTT, Commander-in-chief U. S. Army, in Mexico.

To this communication I received a prompt reply from General Scott, as follows :

“HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

“*Jalapa, May 9th, 1847.*

“SIR:—I have received your note of yesterday, accompanied by Commodore Perry's instructions to you (original); and the copy of his communication to the Mexican minister of foreign affairs; of which you have been made a bearer, in relation to Passed-Midshipman Rogers, supposed by Commodore Perry still to be held by the Mexican government, not as a prisoner of war, but as a spy. And I had some days before, received by your hands, the letter Commodore Perry did me the honor to address me on the same subject, requesting that I would afford you the proper means of placing you in communication with the advanced posts of the enemy, in order that you might, if permitted, pass on to the seat of the Mexican government; and there to present, in person, the demand for the release of Mr. Rogers.—Commodore Perry adds, in his communication, the suggestion whether, in the event of the failure of your special mission, Mr. Rogers may not be released by capitulation, or exchange, etc., etc. Premising, that I have as yet addressed not a line to any political functionary of Mexico; if, in fact, there be any government in the country; and that I have all along intended, at the proper time, to propose for the exchange of Passed-Midshipman Rogers, with other Americans taken prisoners of war, in the north-eastern part of this republic, I think myself, on information, though not official, authorized to say, that the whole of the papers you have brought to my notice, have had their origin in a misapprehension. Mr. Rogers, for many weeks past, has not been held a prisoner for any ignominious act, but as an honorable prisoner of war, at large on parole, within the city of Mexico. On taking leave of many of the higher Mexican prisoners of war, paroled at Vera Cruz, I called their attention to the then reported confinement of Passed-Midshipman Rogers, on the false allegation that he had been captured in the violation of the laws of war; and I added, in the most emphatic terms, if any hardship, injury, or punish-

ment should be sustained by Mr. Rogers, on that false allegation, that I would inflict signal retaliation on the next Mexican officers whom the fortune of war should place in my power. Before the 15th ult., I had already heard, from whom I considered creditable persons, that Mr. Rogers had been released from the Castle of Perote, and sent up with a single Mexican officer, both on horseback, to the capital, as a prisoner of war. This information was confirmed by several of the principal Mexican officers, captured at Cerro Gordo; and again and again since by respectable travelers passing through this place from the capital. I regret that Commodore Perry has thought it necessary to send you, as his special messenger, to treat with the Mexican government on the subject of Mr. Rogers. Even if I had been ignorant of the capture and position of the passed-midshipman, a note from the commodore would have been sufficient to have interested me officially and personally, in his fate; and I doubt the expediency of more than one channel of communication with the Mexican government, on such subjects. But here is at hand, another functionary, who, under very recent instructions from the president of the United States, may perhaps claim to supersede me in the business of exchanging prisoners of war, as in other military arrangements. Mr. Trist, chief clerk of the department of state, appointed minister or commissioner to Mexico, has arrived at Vera Cruz, and may be at this place, with the train expected up, in a few days. Perhaps you had better refer the business of your mission to him. I only make the suggestion. The difficulty of sending forward a flag of truce, at this time, with communications to the Mexican government—if there be a competent government anywhere—consists in the necessity of protecting the flag, by a large escort, against *rancheros*, or banditti, who infest the road all the way to the capital, and who rob and murder even wounded Mexican officers, returning on parole to their own homes. When nearer to the capital, sometime hence, I may nevertheless have occasion to communicate officially, under cover of a flag, and a heavy escort, with anybody there that may be in authority, on the subject of prisoners of war generally. Your communications, and any that Mr. Trist may desire to transmit, may go by the same opportunity. In the meantime, you can remain here, return

to Commodore Perry's squadron, or advance with the army, as may seem to you best. I have no advice to offer on the subject.

"With high personal respect, I remain yours, truly,

"WINFIELD SCOTT.

"Lieut. RAPHAEL SEMMES, U. S. Navy."

It was no doubt true, as General Scott informed me, in the above communication, that he had held several unofficial conversations, on the subject of Mr. Rogers' imprisonment, with Mexican officers; but it was equally true, that as yet, he had not addressed "a line to any political functionary of Mexico," or military functionary either, on the subject of the exchange of prisoners of war. Under these circumstances, the friends of Mr. Rogers could not but feel anxious for his fate. It was as inexplicable to them, as it was to the army and the country, that no effort had been made to exchange either him or any of the Encarnacion prisoners—captured on General Taylor's line, in the preceding February—who had endured great hardships, and who, for the most part, had been kept in close confinement. The latter were not released until after the battles of the valley of Mexico had taken place, in the following August and September. We could not understand why five thousand prisoners had been released on *parole*, at Vera Cruz, and four thousand at Cerro Gordo, without one word's being said, officially, as to the exchange of those unfortunate Americans who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The fact of Mr. Rogers' being on *parole* in the city of Mexico, was unknown to the government, at the date of its instructions to Commodore Perry; and to this officer, also, when he dispatched me on my mission; and if it had been, it could have made no difference, unless the *parole* had been granted with the understanding, that it was not to be withdrawn at a subsequent period, and the pretension of the Mexican government to treat the prisoner as a spy, renewed. It was believed that this indulgence was granted by the enemy, solely on account of his defeats, and the fear of a prompt retaliation. There was no telling at what moment a reverse of our arms might inspire him with courage to seize the prisoner anew, and execute his threat. But independently of this reasoning, the reader cannot fail to perceive the very awkward position, in which General Scott,

previous to the receipt of my note, had placed himself. His assumption being nothing less than that, even the President of the United States, who, beside being the civil chief magistrate, was, *ex officio*, General Scott's commander-in-chief, could not, and *should* not, hold any communication with the enemy, on the subject of my mission, except such as might meet with his approbation, and be passed through him! As it was, he postponed the president and his agents, to suit his own convenience; informing both Mr. Trist and myself, that when *he* should have occasion to send forward an escort, on business of his own, we *might* send, at the same time, any dispatches we might have to present to the Mexican government. I do not mean to charge General Scott with a want of proper sympathy for his unfortunate companions in arms, but he certainly manifested a most unaccountable apathy, with regard to their exchange.

I availed myself of the privilege accorded me, of "following the army in its progress;" and, for some days, in company with my messmates, scoured the country, in every direction, in quest of new beauties of scenery, exercise and recreation. Although we frequently rode forth in parties of two or three only, we were never molested. The defeat of Cerro Gordo seemed to have spread a panic through the country, that armed even a single American officer with the *prestige* of a host. I will not weary the reader with further descriptions of scenery, although the most gorgeous pictures, each one entirely new, were constantly presented to us in these excursions; but if he will accompany me to the cathedral, he shall witness an imposing funeral ceremony.

A Mexican officer, a captain in the 4th Light-infantry, who had been mortally wounded at the battle of Cerro Gordo, was buried hence with the honors of war. The corpse was borne by six Mexican soldiers, under the direction of a Mexican officer—all without their arms—and was deposited on its bier in the center of the building, followed by a large concourse of people. The solemn ritual of the Catholic Church was read in a slow and distinct manner, by a venerable old priest, who seemed himself to be tottering on the verge of the grave, to which he was consigning his brother, while clouds of incense rose from a burning and bur-nished censer in the hands of an attendant. General Scott, the

proud and commanding chief of the battle, in which the victim had fallen; General Twiggs, who had commanded the storming party from which he had received his death wound; Colonel Childs, Colonel Hitchcock, and others of the distinguished officers of the American army, entered soon after the commencement of the service, and ranging themselves around the corpse, listened attentively and reverently to the solemn words of warning spoken by the aged priest. The scene was truly impressive. In the fancifully decorated coffin, lay the honored dead, surrounded by the ghastly emblems which the Catholic Church uses on such occasions to excite to devotion, and around stood the warriors—Americans and Mexicans intermingled—who had so recently met in deadly conflict on the battle-field—uncovered, and paying the last tribute of respect to a fallen brother. The solemn chanting of the choir, and the still more solemn funeral notes of the organ, as they were reverberated and prolonged by the vaulted ceiling; the shaven crown of the aged priest; the perfect stillness which prevailed among the audience; the gorgeous paintings and sculptured altar-pieces; the burning candles, and clouds of incense, all produced the most soothing and devotion-inspiring effect upon the assembled multitude. It was a beautiful and instructive spectacle, to behold the grim visages of the warriors—officers and common soldiers—saddened and robbed, for the moment, of all feeling of hostility, nay softened into sympathy as the service proceeded; and doubtless, many wholesome reflections, on the nothingness of man, and the evanescence of glory, passed through their minds. The service—read in the Latin language—was short. At its conclusion, the coffin was removed from the church, and escorted to the grave by a company of our infantry, with the band of the regiment playing that most solemn and impressive of all tunes—the Dead March. A cavalcade of American officers brought up the rear. A lieutenant of Illinois volunteers, who died also of his wounds, was buried on the same day. In fact, scarcely a day passed that two or three funerals did not take place, of those who were wounded in the late battle. The burying-ground was situated on the heights north of the town, in, as one might fancy, the Elysian Fields of the ancients; and from the balcony of our quarters, we could both see the processions, and hear the roll of

the muffled drum, and the long and mournful cadences of the shrill fife, as the comrades of the deceased, with arms reversed and funeral step, followed their late brother to his honorable resting-place, beneath the acacia and the rose. The most touching incident that came to my notice, during my stay at Jalapa, was one attending the death of Captain Mason, of the Rifles. This officer had lost a leg in the storming of the height of Cerro Gordo. On his removal to Jalapa, he became an object of interest to a lady and her daughter—of one of the best families in the place—who visited him daily, sat by his bed-side, prepared little delicacies for him in the way of food, and in short, administered, during his long illness, in which he alternately hovered on the verge of the grave, and gave signs of convalescence, all those nameless comforts, which woman alone can bestow on such occasions. Their deportment was characterized by a grace and propriety, which would have done honor to the female character, in any part of the world. But at last Death claimed his victim. The daughter, whose compassion had, no doubt, been deepened into admiration and love, would not quit her charge. She was present when the corpse was put into its coffin; watched every movement with earnestness; and when the lid was placed on, and about to be screwed down, thus shutting out from her forever, perhaps, the only vision that had ever led captive her imagination, she could no longer resist the impulses of nature, but burst into a flood of tears, and abandoned herself to a most violent paroxysm of grief! The next day she attended the funeral, arrayed in a deep suit of mourning. Captain Mason was the last of his family. He was the son of the Mason of Virginia, who fell, some years ago, in a bloody duel with McCarty of the same state.

“And he was mourned by one whose quiet grief,  
Less loud, outlasts a people’s for their chief.”

## CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL SANTA ANNA at Orizaba—His letter to President Anaya—Delay of General Scott at Jalapa—His failure to follow up his victory at Cerro Gordo—Vacillation of purpose, and final discharge of the volunteers—Postponement of campaign—Proclamation, and its effects—March of the army from Jalapa to Puebla—Scenes and incidents by the wayside—San Miguel el Soldado—La Hoya, and General Twiggs' encampment—Las Vigas—Perote and Mount Pizarro—Castle of Perote—Hacienda of San Antonio—Tapeahualco.

WHATEVER may be said of the courage of Santa Anna, he undoubtedly displayed great energy of character, and great fertility of resource in this campaign. The fine army of twenty thousand men, which he had raised with so much difficulty, and clothed and equipped, at so great an expense—being compelled, in aid of the public funds, to use his own private credit, and that of his friends—had been beaten and dispersed, as we have seen, by General Taylor at the battle of Buena Vista. Returning from that unfortunate expedition, he rallied two regiments of his beaten army; and with this small fragment, hastened to Cerro Gordo, increasing his force, on the way, to about seven thousand men, by the addition of some new levies, and by calling to his aid the local militia. Being again beaten here—more than one-half his army being made prisoners of war, and the remainder dispersed, and narrowly escaping capture himself—he retired with a mere body-guard, to the town of Orizaba, situated near the base of the mountain of the same name, so often mentioned. From this place, on the 22d of April, four days after the battle of Cerro Gordo, he addressed the following letter to President Anaya:

“ORIZABA, April 22, 1847.

“*My Esteemed Friend*:—The dispatch which I have forwarded to the minister of war, will already have informed you, of the events which occurred on the 18th inst. The enemy made an



extraordinary effort to force the pass, and attacked me with his whole force (which was not less than twelve thousand men), exasperated by the repulse he had received the day before, and because he knew his ruin was inevitable unless he succeeded. He put everything on the hazard of the die; and the cast has been favorable to him. Nevertheless, I do not regard the cause of the nation as hopeless, if it will sustain its honor and independence, as circumstances require. I presume that you have taken all proper measures for the public safety; and first of all, for that of the capital. I shall be able to aid the capital very soon, if it will defend itself. At present, I have with me fifteen hundred men and three pieces of artillery; and there is no doubt but I shall collect, in a few days more, a force equal to that which I rallied at Cerro Gordo. I only require that you should send me some money, through the medium of bills of exchange, as I find it impossible to raise a dollar here. It is necessary, my friend, not to give ourselves up as lost; and before God! you shall see, that I will make no treaty with the enemy, which will dishonor us, or put us in a worse condition. Write to me, when convenient, and reckon always upon the poor services of your most affectionate friend, who wishes you every happiness.

"A. L. DE SANTA ANNA."

Now was the time for General Scott to have pushed on to Mexico; and there can be no doubt, had he done so, that he would have entered the enemy's capital, in triumph, in three weeks after the battle of Cerro Gordo. General Worth, with only four thousand men, took possession of the strong castle of Perote, on the day on which General Santa Anna penned the above letter to President Anaya. In six or eight days more, he could, had his orders permitted him, have been in Mexico—the distance from Perote being only one hundred and fifty miles. As it was, he did not reach Puebla until the 15th May—twenty seven days after the battle of Cerro Gordo. At this time, General Santa Anna, with two or three thousand men, whom he had concentrated from the stragglers of his previous armies, was in the neighborhood of Puebla, too weak to offer any effective opposition to General Worth's entering it. If this were the case on the

15th May, after the Mexican general had had nearly a month to recruit and recover from the effects of his defeat, it may safely be averred, that if General Scott's movement had been prompt, he would not have encountered a Mexican soldier on any part of his route to the capital. Although General Scott had been cramped for means of transportation, in the commencement of the campaign, he was now abundantly supplied. Draught animals had arrived in large numbers, from the United States; mules of the country had been brought in from all quarters; and three hundred of these latter animals had been captured, beside, at Cerro Gordo. But transportation, otherwise than for the baggage of the army, and for the sick and wounded, was not required beyond a very limited extent. From the first day of the entry of the army into Jalapa, it found abundant supplies of provisions. Under the conciliatory and judicious system of treatment pursued by General Scott toward the unarmed population of the country, they readily brought in their produce, of all kinds, to his camp, as to a market where they were sure to find ready sales at high prices. With the exception of a barren district, of a few miles in extent, between Perote and Puebla, and another, of still less extent, between Puebla and the city of Mexico, the whole route was capable of sustaining an army of fifty thousand men, if it had been judiciously moved, and accompanied by proper foraging parties.—When General Scott did finally move from Jalapa, he supplied himself almost wholly with the provisions he had collected at this place, and with those he found on the route; and he maintained himself the whole summer long in Puebla, without drawing a pound of food for his soldiers, or forage for his horses, from Vera Cruz. With regard to men, these were abundant. He had ten thousand (in round numbers) effective troops at his disposal, including the volunteers whom he afterward discharged. This was about the number with which he subsequently marched on the capital, after a delay of four months! Although the campaign which was finally made, was one of the most brilliant recorded in the pages of history, and has established the fame of its distinguished commander on a firm and immovable basis, it is yet to be regretted, that he did not further astonish the world by the rapid conquest I have intimated. General Scott himself,

with the genius of a true soldier, which consists as much in knowing how to follow up his victories as to gain them, had at one time resolved on the step, but afterward vacillated, and finally altered his determination. He had even organized his plan of march, and published his general order (No. 128), notifying it to the army, on the 30th April, twelve days after his late victory. The following are extracts from this order :

“ 1. The divisions of the army in this neighborhood (Jalapa), will be held in readiness to advance soon after the arrival of trains now coming up from Vera Cruz.

“ 2. The route and time for commencing the march will be given at general head-quarters.

“ 3. Major-General Patterson, after designating a regiment of volunteers as a part of the garrison to hold this place, will put his brigades successively in march, with an interval of twenty-four hours between them.

“ 4. Brigadier-General Twiggs' division will follow the movement also by brigades.

“ 5. Each brigade, whether of regulars or volunteers, will be charged with escorting such part of the general supply train of the army as the chiefs of the general staff may have ready to send forward.

“ 6. Every man of the divisions will take two days' subsistence in his haversack. This will be the general rule for all marches, when a greater number of rations is not specially mentioned.

“ 7. As the season is near when the army may no longer expect to derive supplies from Vera Cruz, it must begin to look exclusively to the resources of the country, etc., etc.”

A large proportion of General Scott's army consisted of twelve months volunteers, who had been enlisted in May and June of the preceding year. These men, at the date of this order, had, consequently, on an average, about forty days to serve—ample time, and to spare, as I have before remarked, to have brought the campaign to a glorious conclusion. They had all arrived at Vera Cruz, buoyant with hope and spirit, and full of the romantic ardor of (to use their own phrase), “reveling in the halls of the Montezumas,” and were eager and anxious to move forward. Once in the city of Mexico, they would have remained willingly

with the army until the arrival of reinforcements (and these were being rapidly hastened by the government), to take their place. If it be urged, that it would have been unsafe to advance into the heart of the enemy's country without leaving sufficient garrisons in the rear, to keep open communications with the sea-board, it is replied, that this very thing was finally done—General Scott breaking up the garrison of Jalapa in July, and leaving behind him, when he marched upon the city of Mexico, only a few hundred effective men, respectively in the castle of Perote, and in that of Loretto, at Puebla; in both of which places they were shut up, not daring to push their foraging parties—much less to keep open the road—the distance of ten miles.

Beside, this doctrine of keeping open communications was entirely inapplicable to General Scott's position. Where an army is composed of a hundred thousand men, or more, who are obliged to depend upon their *dépôts* for supplies, in consequence of the inability of the country to support them, it is absolutely necessary to conquer as you go, and to hold certain points, to keep open your communications. But this was not the system of warfare intended to be carried on, or necessary to be carried on, in General Scott's case. It would have required twenty-five thousand men, at the least, to accomplish it. With his ten thousand men, having the ability to feed himself anywhere in the country, there was but one thing to be done, and that was, to carry out the object of the campaign, by capturing, as speedily as possible, the enemy's capital. This done, nothing would have been easier, as it afterward proved, than to open his communications with Vera Cruz, to enable the new levies, which were coming forward, to join him, and to permit his discharged volunteers to return. In fact, these levies afterward opened their own way to the capital, without the least assistance from head-quarters. It is but fair to state, that Santa Anna would, in consequence of not having been further beaten, as he was in the battles of the valley of Mexico, have probably been in greater force outside the walls of the capital, to attack new bodies of troops arriving; which might have rendered it necessary for these troops to have concentrated in larger numbers, before leaving Vera Cruz, instead of marching, as they did, in small detachments of from eight to fifteen hundred.

General Kearney had set General Scott a memorable example of a campaign of the kind I have been considering, in his celebrated march through, and conquest of, New Mexico. This officer, with two thousand seven hundred men, only six hundred of whom were regulars, boldly threw himself into the wilderness, with infantry, artillery, and baggage train; and without other resources, in the heavier articles of consumption, than were afforded by the country, marched near a thousand miles, in fifty days! and on the 18th of August, 1846, amid a salute of artillery, hoisted the flag of the United States in the ancient capital of *Santa Fé*. Most of this march was over a mere trail, and through a barren and badly-watered country. It took General Scott twenty-seven days, as we have seen, to move his advance division from Jalapa to Puebla, a distance of ninety-nine miles, over a national turnpike, and in the heart of a fertile, well-watered, and thickly-inhabited country; and that, too, at a time when the whole road to Mexico was open, and Santa Anna a fugitive in Orizaba, with a few hundred men. But it is useless to dwell further, on what I think the military reader will acknowledge, was a mistake of the distinguished hero of Chippewa, and Cerro Gordo. The general order above quoted was countermanded, and the division of volunteers marched back to Vera Cruz, under General Patterson, where they were subsequently discharged, and sent to the United States.

After the discharge of the volunteers, General Scott decided upon marching upon Puebla, reuniting his remaining forces, with those of General Worth, and awaiting, in this great inland city of the Cordilleras, for reinforcements. His forces, upon his arrival in Puebla, amounted to about six thousand men. Having issued a proclamation, at Vera Cruz, which added very much to the exasperation of the Mexican people, by reminding them of their internal broils, and alluding to their bad government, he put forth a still more offensive one before leaving Jalapa. Nothing is more useless, perhaps, than the issuing long argumentative proclamations, in an enemy's country, with the hope of producing any beneficial effect; and nothing is more difficult than to draw up such papers, so as to avoid giving offense to the national sensibilities. Generals, with the best intentions, frequently sin in this

particular. Napoleon was the only modern general whose proclamations will bear reading. His never exceeded half a dozen lines, and were *argumenta ad hominem*; the only kind of proclamation that should ever be addressed to an enemy. The proclamation of Jalapa was very creditable, as a literary production, but it sinned grievously in its egotistical tone, and in its want of tact, in re-opening the sores of the Mexican body-politic. Nations, like individuals, do not like to be told of their faults, and least of all, do they like to be told of them by their enemies. The bickerings of politicians are like family quarrels, which none but the members of the family should intermeddle with. In General Scott's appeal to the people against their rulers, and in his endeavor to excite the common soldiery against their generals, he made the fundamental mistake, too, of supposing that there *was* a people in Mexico to be appealed to. Every one, at all acquainted with Mexican affairs, knows, as I have stated in a preceding part of these memoirs, that about one-sixth of the Mexican population rules the country, the other five-sixths being mere cyphers, little above the beasts of burthen, whose offices they, in part, perform, and incapable of the least mental exertion. When, therefore, the people of Mexico—that is, the one-sixth, who are both people and rulers at the same time—were told that their government was rotten, and their rulers knaves, they were, in fact, told that they were all knaves. A statement, which, however true it may be, was calculated rather to irritate and excite, than to conciliate. General Scott's proclamation circulated, as a matter of course, through all parts of the country, and produced great excitement; effectually reversing any pacific intentions, the people might have entertained, after their several defeats. Santa Anna, in consequence of his want of success, had lost all *prestige* with the nation, and was already becoming odious. In the city of Mexico, they debated a long time, whether they would permit him to enter, after the battle of Cerro Gordo. The inhabitants of the capital, fearing the fate of Vera Cruz—the horrors of the siege of which had been magnified to them, ten-fold—were inclined to submit to our arms, without making any defense; and if General Scott, instead of issuing his impolitic proclamation, had hastened forward to reap the fruits of his victory, there is no telling what might

have been the result. It is possible, and even probable, that Santa Anna would have been banished a second time, and a peace forthwith concluded with the United States. To show that I do not exaggerate the degree of exasperation, produced by this celebrated state-paper, I quote below a passage or two from a pamphlet, written in reply to it, by an intelligent Mexican:

“ If a knowledge of our duty had not induced us to embrace with enthusiasm, and with faith, the sacred cause of Mexican independence, the reading of the manifest, which we are about to answer, would have been sufficient to cause us to take an active part in the present contest. Has the North American general properly appreciated the magnitude of the insult which he has offered to Mexicans, and which we will remember in the day of our vengeance? Did the chief of the invading army propose to himself, to blind some, to divide others, and to deceive all with false promises, and untrue protestations? If so, he has produced a contrary result; he has aroused in all hearts a holy indignation; he has made us feel the necessity of union, in order that we may revenge so many outrages; and, finally, he has inspired us with a noble resolution, of never treating with an enemy, as cruel as perfidious. Fortunately, we are not as imbecile as General Scott supposes us, nor as degraded, as it would be necessary for us to be, to listen with a serene front, to his insults and his threats, in that language of protection and of pity, in which he addresses us. But let us descend to a reply to that defamatory libel upon our name; let us say something concerning that celebrated document, which, certainly, neither displays the practiced diplomatist, the distinguished military chief, nor the astute and dextrous politician, but *the man of conquest*, who, to the scandal of the civilized world, enters our territory, at the head of a horde of immoral adventurers, like an Alaric, or an Attila. \* \* \* \* We reply, with an erect brow and a conscience free from all stain, that whatever may be our condition, whatever our errors, we do not recognize in a stranger, and still less in an enemy, the right to chide us, or to protect us against our will, or to counsel us against our consent; and that we throw back his offered protection and accept war, preferring death to dishonor. \* \* \* \* The insidious words of our enemies have caused us much indignation,

and we have been inexpressibly grieved, at the picture they have drawn of our evils—a picture, unfortunately, too true. Nevertheless, we prefer these evils to the happiness which is offered us, at the mouth of the cannon and the point of the bayonet. Alone, we conquered our liberty; alone, will we judge of what should constitute our prosperity; and alone, will we pursue it. We have no need of strangers, nor do we ask them for counsel in our troubles—we prefer rather to take counsel of our courage and our reason. We repeat, that whatever may be our condition, we prefer it, a thousand times, to that which is offered us at the price of our independence; and General Scott may rest satisfied, that all good Mexicans think as we do. \* \* \* \* \* Has General Scott informed his nation, that beside burning our cities, and assassinating the families who reside in them, and spilling our blood in a barbarous and cruel manner, he chides us like beardless youths for our errors? Is the hero of the bombardment of Vera Cruz, as dextrous in playing the part of a pedagogue, as in cowardly attacks to destroy a city?" The American reader perceives, of course, the Mexican propensity to exaggeration and bombast displayed in the above extracts, and the injustice done to General Scott, and our people; but he perceives, also, the deep thrill of indignation which had been produced by the proclamation I have been reviewing—a paper, which, although written with all becoming dignity, and much insight into the condition of things in Mexico, revealed too many plain truths to be palatable, and was therefore impolitic.

Preparations began to be actively made, soon after the issue of this paper, for our movement upon Puebla. On the 14th of May, a train, consisting of two hundred and twenty wagons, and one thousand and fifty pack-mules, escorted by six hundred men, arrived from Vera Cruz with supplies. It had been General Scott's intention to march immediately upon the arrival of this train, but learning that there would be another up, in four or five days, he resolved to await the arrival of the latter. This train, consisting of one hundred and fifty wagons, having arrived on the 20th, orders were issued for a forward movement on the 22d. In the meantime, Lieutenant Colonel Childs, a tried and veteran soldier, of decided military talents, and cool and discriminating



judgment, was selected to remain in Jalapa, as commandant of the garrison to be left here, and governor of the town. In the latter capacity he had already been acting for some weeks, and had given general satisfaction, not only to the army, but to the native population. Indeed, he had become so popular with the citizens of the place, that on the eve of our departure, they gave him a very handsome ball, which was attended by many of the better classes, and particularly by the ladies; which latter, some how or other, seemed always to have less antipathy to the gay uniforms and fine persons of our dashing young officers, than their husbands and fathers.

On the afternoon of the 22d, General Twiggs took up his line of march, and proceeded some five or six miles out of the city; where he was to encamp for the night, and be joined, on the following morning, by the general-in-chief, and the various staff corps. It was a fine sight to see this veteran division, which had won so much fame at Cerro Gordo, file through the streets, arrayed in their best uniforms, with bands playing, and their regimental colors, pierced by the balls and begrimed by the smoke of battle, unfurled to the breeze. The balconies were filled with fair spectators; and as the division had been quartered in the town a month, and as love sometimes makes short work, as well as war, there was no doubt many a gentle sigh heaved on the occasion—at the *lavandero*, at least. Movement is the life of the soldier; he soon tires of the inactivity and luxury of cities, be these never so luxurious; and the bronzed features of those fine-looking fellows were lighted up with the radiance of anticipation, as they thus commenced anew their progress in that wonderful and romantic region, the *plateaus* of the Cordilleras of the Andes. Other fields and other glories beckoned them onward; and each soldier looking, for himself, on the bright side only of the picture of war, saw only its tapestried outlines, unmindful of the grim phantom of death lurking in the background. As Seymour and I belonged to the staff, by virtue of our mess arrangements, we were to move in the shadow of the commander-in-chief. Our arrangements were soon made. The gallant caterer of our mess (with the able assistance of Monsieur *Auguste*) relieved us of all trouble on the score of subsistence, so that the tin pots and forked sticks, which

we had used on the road from Vera Cruz, would henceforth be *hors du combat*. Seymour, therefore, had only to buy himself an extra plug of tobacco, reeve a new lanyard for his jack-knife, and—take leave of his washerwoman, and we were ready for the road.

Everything was bustle and confusion, in our quarters, on the morning of the 23d, as horses were being saddled, valises packed and strapped on, holsters and pistols adjusted, etc. It was Sunday, and we sallied forth about ten o'clock, A. M., while the church-bells, with their solemn and prolonged peals, were calling the good people of the town to mass. The notes of the bugle collecting the different squads, and sounding the advance, and the clattering of the iron-armed hoofs of the heavy cavalry horses over the paved streets, presented, in strange contrast, the sounds of war with those of "peace and good-will among men," which are the foundations of the Christian religion. The morning was one of the brightest of the mornings of Jalapa; and the reader has been informed how bright and beautiful these were. The sun shone forth with his wonted splendor, the air was redolent of perfume and of the song of birds, and the landscape, at all times lovely, seemed still more so on the present occasion. The rains, which had fallen on the two or three preceding evenings, gave a delightful freshness to the vegetation, which in the morning sun presented that depth and variety of tint, which I have before noticed as peculiar to the region. Orizaba, with its snow-clad crest glittering like so much burnished silver in the dancing sunbeams; the *Cofre* of Perote, and the lesser and nearer spurs of the Cordilleras, added grandeur and sublimity to the picturesque landscape below. For several miles out of town, the road was one string of human beings—horsemen; straggling foot-soldiers, who had been left behind by their regiments, the evening before, and were hurrying forward to join them; officers; citizens, who were followers of the army; and even several tidy-looking *horses-women*—all bound to the "city of the Angels," as Puebla is called, in the vernacular. Sunday being a market-day in Jalapa, crowds of Indians were flocking into town, to church and to market at the same time, laden with country-chairs, and other articles of rude manufacture, vegetables, flowers, etc. It was surprising to

see what burthens these men, and women too, had, by long habit, enabled themselves to bear. A single *Tamame*—burthen-bearer—will sometimes carry as much as three hundred pounds. With their bodies inclined forward, and their burthens adjusted on their backs, and kept in their places by leathern straps passing round the chest and forehead, they moved along in a kind of dog-trot, without looking either to the right or the left, entirely unmindful, to all appearance, of the brilliant pageant which was passing before them. What cared they for the pride and pomp of war, *they* were “hewers of wood and drawers of water!” They were all dressed in the coarsest and homeliest garbs, indicating the toil and poverty which were their lot in this land on which heaven had bestowed many of its choicest favors.

We crossed the small river Zedano—which, being joined by another small stream, falls into the sea as the Atopan—on a massive stone bridge, some three miles from Jalapa. A few miles further on, we passed through the village of Zedano, and beyond this, we overtook the infantry regiments, a large caravan of pack-mules, and a lengthy wagon train, consisting of four hundred wagons. The country on both sides of us was clothed with the richest vegetation, and was still more beautiful, if this be possible, than that around Jalapa, from its being more broken and presenting a greater variety of scenery. The road-side abounded in shade-trees and flowering shrubs, intermingled with fruit-trees of many varieties—among which we noticed the cherry and the apple; indicating, like barometers, our approach to a more elevated region. Our ascent was quite gradual until we reached the little town of *San Miguel el Soldado*, situated beautifully on a hill-side, and with its white houses embowered in a mass of foliage; the church spire alone rising above the tops of the trees. From this point, the road winds up steep ascents all the way to *La Hoya*. In places it was hewed, as it were, out of the steep hill-side, and was revetted and parapeted for the security of the traveler. From one of these parapets, high above San Miguel, which now appeared a mere speck at our feet, we had a magnificent view of the surrounding country; which reminded us very much of the mountainous parts of Pennsylvania, except that it was much more broken, and was almost entirely devoid of cultivation—a patch of Indian-corn and

barley, here and there, being the only indications of the husbandman. Isolated conical hills, of regular shape, and covered to the very summit with tall forest trees, and romantic valleys, stretching far away into the distance, were predominant features of the landscape. The atmosphere was cool and fragrant, and its transparency most remarkable. The winding road—which here climbed a long and steep ascent—covered, for two or three miles, with white-tented wagons, cavalry and infantry now appearing and now disappearing as they followed its sinuosities, gave life and animation to the beautiful picture, and added to the many associations with which every step, in this interesting country, is fraught. From this height a beautiful waterfall may be seen, many leagues away, appearing like a mere thread of silver thrown over the surface of the rocky bluff from which it is precipitated.

Just before reaching La Hoya, we lose the rich vegetation I have been describing, which is supplanted, in the course of a thousand feet, or so, of ascent, by the growth of an entirely different climate. The pine, and other evergreens of high latitudes, now make their appearance, and the country becoming more broken than ever, begins to be covered with fragments of volcanic rock. *La Hoya* is another of the strong defiles on the road to Mexico. A conical hill, rising to the height of five hundred feet, and reminding one very much of Cerro Gordo, commands the high-road, which winds along its base for the space of two miles and more. This is but the beginning of the pass; other rocky heights, broken into deep chasms, continue to present themselves, and enfilade the steep ascent. Breastworks, which must have cost the enemy infinite toil, were constructed along these heights, and timber had been felled, and the undergrowth cleared away, to give free range to artillery and musketry.

We found several pieces of ordnance here, which the enemy had abandoned upon his defeat at Cerro Gordo, and which General Worth, in his advance, had spiked and otherwise rendered useless.

In a small valley, imbosomed in this rocky scenery, and through the green-sward of which meandered a small stream, General Twiggs encamped for the night. His busy little camp, with its white tents, parked wagon train, and picketed cavalry, presenting,

in contrast with the wild and jagged hill-tops, one of those beautiful and romantic spectacles which the pen is so powerless to describe. We, of the staff, halted here to rest for half an hour, and then pushed on, intending to spend the night at *Las Vigas*, higher up the mountain. My horse having lost a shoe, in that short half hour a traveling-forgé, belonging to Captain Taylor's battery, lighted up its fires and replaced it with a new one.

From *La Hoya* to *Las Vigas*, the distance is two leagues, and the ascent rapid and continuous. The country continued to be covered with volcanic rock, which presented the appearance of having been cooled suddenly, while in a state of ebullition. The character of the whole scenery was singularly romantic; hills, now and then swelling into mountain-peaks of the most fantastic and rugged outlines (from whose fissures and crevices sprang the somber pine, with a thick and tangled undergrowth of brush and brier beneath which trickled small streams of water) rose on every hand. Mosses and lichens, and a dwarfed species of the *agave Americana*, or aloe, also made their appearance. Occasionally, as we toiled up the steep ascent, the view would open upon the country below, and the eye would wander over many leagues of a wild and barren waste, until it rested, in fatigue, on the distant horizon.

At an early hour in the afternoon, we reached the village of *Las Vigas*—the beams—elevated 7812 feet above the level of the sea. It contains some five or six hundred people, who live in rude stone and log houses—the latter covered with pine slabs, pegged on with wooden pins for want of nails. The only object of attraction was a church, not quite finished, with a remarkably tasteful dome. The cavalry picketed their horses in the churchyard, as yet untenanted by the dead, and slept in the body of the building. The General took up his quarters in the *cabildo*, or town house; and our mess—quarter-masters having the selection and arrangement of quarters, as their name implies—was comfortably housed, of course; that is to say, as comfortably as we could be, in a dirty house without furniture. The inhabitants generally had run off, some days before, and taken with them, or secreted, their effects.

The night was clear, and the stars bright, and the keen moun-

tain air caused me to wrap my blanket closely around me, and seek the shelter of a pile of oats in the straw, which had been left in the room in which I slept. Before we retired, Auguste, who had managed to pick up a few eggs, and a handful of *frijoles*—beans of the country—prepared us an excellent supper; to which we did ample justice, after our long and toilsome ride among the mountains. With the aid of my friendly pile of straw, I should have passed a capital night, but for the fleas, which assaulted me without mercy.

We were astir at an early hour, the next morning; and before sunrise, I walked to the small brook, which the natives dignified with the title of *rio!*—river—and performed my ablutions in its limpid waters, *al fresco*. I enjoyed the cool morning air as one does the sight of an old acquaintance, and had the satisfaction to feel the tips of my fingers tingle with the frost, as I withdrew them from the mountain streamlet. After being burned to death on the ocean, and in the *tierra caliente*, for the last eighteen months, it was a charming variety to be frozen!

Leaving *Las Vigas* at half past seven, we reached *Perote* at eleven; the distance being four leagues. After a few miles of Alpine road and scenery, such as we had passed over the day before, except that the lava disappeared (giving place to various laminated rocks and granite), and the hill-sides were more cultivated, we crossed a little stream, on the banks of which stood a ruined stone building, and in attempting to ford which, at the wrong point, Monsieur Auguste's horse got bogged, and threw him, sabre and all, into the mud, we debouched into the plain of *Perote*. The road now ran along the base of the *Sierra*—mountain ledge—on the left, on which rises the *Cofre* of *Perote*, a remarkable peak visible for many miles in every direction, and which I had often gazed upon from the deck of the *Somers*, as I had been blockading *Vera Cruz*. I welcomed it as an old friend. As we rode along, we changed it from the form of a square block, or coffer, or chest—whence its name—first into a fortress, and then into a ruined castle. It is below the permanent snow-level, but is sometimes covered with the element during the prevalence of storms, when it resembles a coffin, with a huge winding-sheet thrown over it. The plain was well cultivated—that is to say,

after the fashion of the country—the man of two thousand years ago turning up the soil with a yoke of oxen, and with the identical plow described by Virgil. The crops, which consisted chiefly of Indian-corn, and a large bean of the country, called the *haba* (extensively used for food by the common people), were suffering for want of rain. Mount Pizarro, a conical mountain of regular shape, and standing entirely alone, in the vast plain, as if it had been forcibly upheaved like an island in the sea, by some convulsion of nature, rose upon the view as we turned an angle of the Sierra; and soon afterward, we espied the castle and town of Perote, relieved against the base of this mountain, which stood beyond it.

The alcalde quartered us upon an old woman, the housekeeper of a family *non est*, who, at first, was terribly alarmed, but whom we soon succeeded in soothing and putting in a good humor. Seymour, who was not sure but the old beldam might have a pretty daughter, was the principal agent in this process of dulcification. Auguste, who, in cooking our supper the night before, at Las Vigas, had nearly smoked his eyes out over a fire, built *à la wigwam* in the center of the floor, was delighted to find here a regular and well ordered *cocina*—kitchen.

The town of Perote contains about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and has two churches; the only buildings of any note. The principal of these, fronts on one side of the plaza—public square—and its steeple, which towers to a great height, serves as a landmark to point out the position of the city, for many leagues over the boundless plain. The center of the plaza is adorned with a tasteful *jet d'eau*, affording to the inhabitants an abundant supply of pure and cool water, fresh from the mountains. The mass of the buildings, which are but one story in height, were constructed of the *adobe*, or sun-dried brick.

In the afternoon, I visited the famous castle of Perote, memorable, in the revolutionary annals of Texas, as the dreary prison of many of her captured soldiers. We met a funeral at the main portcullis—some soldier having fallen a victim to war, or the climate—and halted until it filed past; the sentinel “presenting arms” to the body of his deceased comrade, and the notes of the muffled drum, and the moaning wife, falling but too painfully

on the ear. On the advance of General Worth, the Mexican garrison had been withdrawn, and but a single officer, Colonel Vasquez, was left behind, with orders to deliver up the work upon the approach of our troops. This was accordingly done, upon summons. This immense fortress is a quadrangle, with four bastions, and covers two acres of ground. Its parapets are eight feet in thickness, and rise to the height of sixty feet from the bottom of the moat, which is counterscarped with stone, and is from fifty to seventy-five feet wide, and fifteen feet deep. The citadel, which is at the same time the quarters of the officers, occupies the center of the fortress, and forms a hollow square. In this, and in the casemates, four thousand troops may be comfortably lodged, although fifteen hundred would be a sufficient garrison. The whole fortress is of the most massive and substantial masonry. It had been stripped of much of its armament. We found only a few light pieces—16s being the heaviest. I had the curiosity to measure the diameter of a mammoth brass mortar, of Spanish manufacture, which I saw here—it measured seventeen and a half inches. The armory, capable of containing fifty thousand stand of arms, the numerous workshops, store rooms, etc., ranged around the walls, were in the most complete order. The armorers had apparently just left their anvils; and we saw several barrels of leaden balls, of various sizes, from one to eight ounces, which had, no doubt, been cast only a few days before General Worth's arrival. Religion is not lost sight of amidst all this terrible array of war, as there is quite a neat chapel in one corner of the square, inclosed by the citadel. President Guadalupe Victoria, the first president of the Mexican republic, was buried here; a plain wooden slab, in one of the walls, points out his resting-place. Such is the strength and completeness of this fortress, that if it had chosen to withstand a siege, it might, if it had been thought worth the trouble, have cost us much labor and patience to have captured it. But except that it is on the main road to the capital, and would have afforded the enemy a convenient point, from which to have carried on a guerrilla warfare against our trains and small detachments, its possession was not of the least value to us. Being built in the open plain, it commands no pass, and does not obstruct, in any manner, the passage of an army. It



seems to have been intended, by the Spanish government, as a mere place of arms, to overawe and rule the surrounding country. Like San Juan de Ulloa, it has played an important part in all the Mexican revolutions; and many of the incendiary state papers issued, from time to time, by the chiefs of the army, have been treasonably concocted within its precincts. The sooner the plow-share is passed over it, and all similar structures in Mexico, the better it will be for the people. As we had approached the town, we had been somewhat puzzled by the appearance of the flag that floated over the castle; the field of the union being green, instead of blue. We were not sure, at first, but that Colonel Wynkoop, infected by the atmosphere of the place, had made a *pronunciamiento*; and at the head of his gallant Pennsylvanians, set up for himself. Meeting one of his captains, who spoke more good German than Anglo-Saxon, we inquired the cause of the phenomenon; which he explained to us very lucidly and satisfactorily, as follows:—"Yaw, yaw, de green ish not blüe, but den, you see, de stars ish white!" By which form of expression, the gallant captain meant to convey to us the idea, that so long as the stars were all right, it mattered not what kind of a field they floated in. The flag had, in fact, been constructed of Mexican bunting, and as Mexico wears no blue in her national standard, we had been obliged to substitute green.

Except an occasional straggling plant, in the neighborhood of Jalapa and on the road-side, we saw here, for the first time, the *agave Americana*, or maguey plant, as it is vulgarly called, which is extensively and profitably cultivated on the table-lands of Mexico. The plant is from five to six years in maturing, and is propagated by means of suckers from the roots. All the cordage, sacks, mats, etc., used for domestic purposes, are made of the fibrous portions of the leaves, which grow from five to seven feet in length; and the wine of the country, or rather a fermented liquor more nearly resembling our cider, used extensively by the common people, is made of its juices. The process of extracting this liquid, is very simple. When the plant is from three to four years old, the top part of the main stem is cut off, and a hole or basin scooped into it, into which exudes the sap or juice of the plant—without injuring its growth. This is bailed out every morning,

by a man with a small gourd, who pours the contents into a hog-skin slung over his shoulder. The juice of a single plant amounts, in the course of twenty-four hours, to a pint, or half a gallon, according to its development. This liquid, when it has undergone fermentation, which takes place in from three to ten days, is fit for use. It resembles, in appearance, milk and water, and has, to one unaccustomed to it, a taste similar to that of buttermilk, which has stood a day or two and become exceedingly acid. It will intoxicate, if taken in large quantities; and the natives, high and low, are very fond of it. Pulque (the name given this liquor) is only found in the highlands in the interior—the magney not flourishing in the *tierra caliente*; and nature seems thus to have located it, to answer a valuable purpose in her economy.—As the traveler ascends the mountain slopes of the Cordilleras, he finds, after reaching a certain height—about the level of Perote and Puebla—that the cutis ceases to perform one of its most important functions; perspiration being checked so entirely, that the utmost exertion is scarcely sufficient to moisten even the forehead. This sudden shock to the vital economy, which might otherwise be highly injurious, is remedied, in a great measure, by the use of the drink I have been describing—the pulque being a gentle diuretic. It is, accordingly recommended with reason, to all new comers. At first, I had to hold my nose and take it as a medicine; but, after a short time, in common with others, I became quite fond of it; and Auguste frequently placed this *vino del país* on our dinner table.

We halted but a single night in Perote, and were in the saddle again by eight o'clock, the next morning. On mustering our forces we ascertained that one of our dragoons had been stabbed and robbed during the night. Although we made diligent search, no clue could be found to the detection of the criminal. The air was delightfully cool and bracing, though the morning was not very bright. Our road continued to traverse the plain, we had entered upon the day before, and the country for a short distance was cultivated in maize and barley—the fields being inclosed by the useful and ornamental magney, which, with its thorn-pointed leaves, presented very effectual barriers against the encroachments of stock. After riding some five or six miles, all traces of culti-

vation disappeared, and we entered upon a desolate-looking tract of barren, sandy country, producing a scant crop of grass, on which were browsing, here and there, a flock of sheep.

We witnessed, here, for the first time, the *mirage*, so often spoken of by travelers, and so common in high latitudes, or their equivalents, great elevations. Although we were prepared for this illusion, we were completely deceived by it; every one being sure that he saw a lake sleeping in tranquil beauty, and reflecting back from its surface, the crests of the neighboring Sierra, in a spot where we found as we approached it, there was not a drop of water! The most curious spectacle of this kind I ever beheld, was off the coast of South America, some years ago, while cruising in one of our ships-of-war. We were standing close in for the bold highlands abreast of *Caraccas*, on rather a dark night, when we distinctly saw reflected, in a cloud that hovered over the city, the lights, and as we fancied, the outlines of the houses.

At the hacienda of San Antonio we stopped to water our horses, and rest for half an hour, while the baggage teams were being brought up. This was the only place where water was to be had between Perote and Tepeahualco—a distance of nineteen miles—the well here was two hundred and ten feet deep. The hacienda was little more than a caravanseray, consisting of a cluster of huts, with an immense *corral*—court-yard—inclosed by high stone walls, for the accommodation of droves of cattle, and their attendants. These haciendas are all fortresses, where the people are gathered together in small communities, as a means of protection from the hordes of bandits who infest this wild and sparsely populated region. The remainder of our march to Tepeahualco was through a perfect waste—the plain being on a dead level, and presenting the appearance of having once been the bed of an inland sea. Our cavalcade raised clouds of dust, as it advanced over the sun-burned road, and the country was devoid of vegetation, except a few blades of stunted grass that were struggling through the drowth for existence. The mountains, which arose on either hand, and locked us in, as in a basin, seeming thus to give color to the idea of our traversing what had once been the bed of the ocean, were as devoid of vegetation as the plain below; presenting their naked sides, seamed and scarred by the elements, to

the sun, which, by this time had made his appearance, and scorching us, as we occasionally approached them on the one hand or the other, with his deflected rays. The barren and gloomy aspect of the near landscape was relieved and redeemed by the magnificence of the more distant mountain scenery. On our left, the Cofre of Perote and Orizaba, still accompanied us, as they had done most of the way from Vera Cruz, as "clouds by day," chained together by other heights and spurs but little inferior to them in grandeur; and on our right, we approached and passed, about mid-day, that most singular of mountain cones, Mount Pizarro, before noticed, rising to the height of two thousand feet and more, in the midst of the plain. On its apex had been planted, by some enterprising individuals, a gigantic cross, which towered as a land-mark for many leagues around. A more fit temple for the worship of the All-powerful and Infinite could not have been conceived. A storm of wind and rain overtook us as we were winding around the base of this cone; and the sharp crashes of thunder over our heads, and the playing of the forked lightning around the cross on the summit of the mountain—the vivid flashes being rendered still more vivid by being relieved against the dense, black cloud beyond—presented us with a sublime spectacle of the war of the elements. We quickened our pace, and some of us unstrapped and drew on our *serapes*, but we outstripped the shower, which seemed to prefer to linger around the mountain, and fortunately we escaped a wetting.

About one o'clock, P. M., we descried, at a distance, some white-washed walls, and green patches of vegetation, forming what appeared to be an oasis in the desert; and soon afterward we entered, not an oasis, but a mud-built town in a maguey plantation. The beauty of the prospect, like the *mirage* of the morning, vanished upon our entry. Several large *corrales*, a *messen*—inn—with portals in front, and two or three hundred huts of the most miserable description, formed the town of *Tepeahualco*. It was situated near the base of a perpendicular mountain of granite, with superincumbent layers of limestone, whose naked cliffs were unrelieved by a single shrub, or blade of grass; and down the sides of which had thundered, from time to time, masses of rock, which lay strewed around.

The church, which we visited—having first assured the ignorant *padre* (all priests, in Mexico, are reverentially and affectionately called *padre*; that is, father) that we were not Jews—stood in bold proximity to the mountain, like a pigmy at the foot of a giant, seeming to covet its protection. Thus relieved, it formed a beautiful and picturesque feature of the landscape. It was a large, and had once been an elegant, building; but was now, like almost every noble relic of the past one meets with in Mexico, in a state of decay, fast verging toward dilapidation. Beneath the floor was a cemetery; a series of wooden trap-doors, or hatches, leading to the vaults, where had been deposited the remains of the dead generations, which had been successively gathered to their fathers, in the last two centuries—the building having apparently about this age. We trod reverentially over these mementoes of mortality, and conversed in tones scarcely above a whisper, as we wandered through the silent aisles of the venerable old church—which preached to us more eloquently of the frail tenure of our existence, and of the short span of human life, than could have done the most elaborate discourse. There were much antique carving and gilding, and many bad paintings and worse attempts at sculpture in wood, dispersed throughout the building. There were many ruins in this vicinity, showing that Tepeahualco had formerly been a much more extensive town, than it is at the present day. Beside the houses before noticed, as lying in the plain, and which formed the town proper, there was a number of Indian huts or hovels perched on a somewhat elevated ridge of lava near by. This ridge or dyke of lava extended several miles, as far as the base of Mount Pizarro, whence, in some former convulsion, it had, no doubt, issued. It lay piled in the most fantastic shapes; and, in places where it had been disintegrated by the long action of the elements, it was covered by a luxuriant growth of the cactus, maguey, etc.; among which the natives had built their huts. These frail structures were made of small reeds and sticks, and loose stones piled up, and were covered with grass, bark, the palm-leaf, etc. So abject is the population of this ridge, that many of the families are real troglodytes, living in caves or burrows, like so many rabbits. The women seemed to be prolific in proportion to their poverty; as every hut and cavern was

filled with naked children. These wild little creatures peered at us from their holes and hiding-places, like so many elves, which we should certainly have taken them to be, had we visited their eyre by moonlight.

In the evening, a couple of Mexican officers, who had been paroled at Vera Cruz, called on General Scott. One was a lieutenant-colonel, and the other a captain of artillery. They had been as far as Puebla, and were now on their return to Jalapa.—One of them begged a few dollars, which the general ordered to be given him, to pay his way! and both of them spoke in terms of great harshness of Santa Anna, who, as they averred, had deprived them of their pay, because they had refused to break their parole and join him at Cerro Gordo! This allegation of the faithlessness of the Mexican general, in the matter of parole, was afterward corroborated by indisputable evidence.

Just before we entered the town, a party of a hundred or more lancers scampered off. We occupied the house in which they had been quartered, and found abundance of forage for our horses in the stable-yard, in which they had rather hastily "saddled" up."

The view from our balcony was striking and unique. We seemed to be in the center of an extensive valley, and land-locked—to use an expressive sea phrase—by tall mountains of every conceivable form. The evening sky was overcast, and a dull leaden hue pervaded alike mountain-top and plain below.—As the shades of night began to fall, the most perfect quiet reigned in every direction, and the landscape of "still life" produced a saddening and depressing effect upon the beholder. His feelings seemed to partake of the somber coloring in which all nature was sinking to rest. As our quarters were removed some distance from those of the main body of the escort, and our household consisted of only eight persons, we found it necessary, as a precaution against surprise, to set a watch; each one of us taking the "look out" for an hour. My tour passed without incident. Before the expiration of my watch, I was obliged to wrap myself more closely in the folds of my *serape*, as it had now become quite cold; the blinking of the snow, on the top of Orizaba, almost giving me a chill.

## CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUATION of journey from Jalapa to Puebla—The road from *Tepeahualco* to *Ojo de Agua*—Hacienda of San José—Napolucan; its beautiful situation in the heart of a fertile district—The indigence of its inhabitants—the Pass of the Pinal—a famous retreat for banditti—Hacienda where General Mexia was shot—The town of Acajete—Encampment for the night—Interview with the cura and the alcalde—Ignorance of these officials—First view of the volcanoes of Puebla—*Amosoque*—the great spur manufactory—The plain of Puebla—Approach to the city—Our Lady of Loretto—Met by generals Worth and Quitman, and escorted into the city—Description of Puebla—Tlascala and Cholula—Puebla as a manufacturing district—Cultivation and manufacture of cotton—Other manufactures—Agriculture—Price of labor—The *Mozo* system.

WE resumed our march, a little before eight, the next morning. As we were filing out of the town, we discovered that a number of outsiders—that is, gentlemen black-legs—had overtaken us, and joined our escort, in violation of orders. There were only six or eight of them, and these men had traversed the whole distance between Perote and Tepeahualco, in utter contempt of the enemy. They were all turned back. They, no doubt, brought up our rear, however, at a safe distance, both from General Scott and the enemy, as I afterward found some of them dealing *faro* and *monte* in Puebla. The country through which we rode for several hours, presented the same barren and dreary aspect it had done the day before. The sky continued overcast, and the crests of the surrounding mountains were covered by banks of dull gray clouds, that reached half way down their sides. We occasionally passed through fields of pumice-stone, and now and then came upon a few straggling and squalid huts belonging to the rude Indians, who were the herdsmen of the neighboring haciendas. We witnessed the *mirage* again this morning; the illusory lake reflecting one or two houses that stood on the neighboring heights. The plain still continued on a dead level, and the road was firm and compact, save where it was covered by an

occasional patch of sand. The only growth of the mountains, many of which rose, like Mount Pizarro, abruptly, and singly in the midst of the plain, was a stunted species of fern, and that universal denizen of barren districts, the prickly-pear. This latter appeared at intervals on the plain also, and instead of the diminutive plant it is with us, grew to the height of from twenty to thirty feet. After we had journeyed some three hours, the plain branched off to the northward, between two parallel ridges of mountains, and presented a lengthy vista of meadow-land, better covered with grass than that portion of it which skirted our road. Numerous herds of cattle were feeding on this meadow; and far away in the distance, were seen the white-washed houses and tall church-steeple of the village of *San Juan de los Llanos*, containing about three thousand inhabitants. About mid-day we halted, for half an hour, at *Vireyes*, a hacienda picturesquely situated at the very base of a steep mountain ridge. Here we procured chocolate, and pulque, and gave water to our horses—this being the only watering place between Tepeahualco and Ojo de Agua, where we proposed halting for the night.—The whole plain from Perote to this latter point—a distance of thirty-five miles—is impregnated with mineral substances, and the water, which has to be drawn up from a great depth, is very indifferent. Around this hacienda were grouped, as usual, the straw huts of the miserable dependents of the estate.

After leaving *Vireyes*, the country, though still almost a desert, improved somewhat in appearance. We passed, on our left, quite an extensive corn-field; but the land was sandy and poor, and judging from the stalks of the preceding year, which were lying in a field on the opposite side of the road, the crop did not promise to be very abundant. The weather, which had been cool enough in the morning, to bring into requisition our overcoats, now moderated, and the sun bursting forth, soon began to make us feel uncomfortable beneath his ardent and nearly perpendicular rays. The reflection of the heat from the naked soil, especially while passing through an occasional gorge or ravine, where there was not a breath of air stirring to mitigate it, became really oppressive, and we had a most uncomfortable ride for several hours. The great objection to the climate of this portion of the table lands of



Mexico is, these alternations of heat and cold, which are excessive. In the course of a single day, one sometimes passes through several changes, from winter to summer, and *vice versa*. The nights are always cold; and many of us, accustomed to northern climates, suffered exceedingly from the penetrating keenness of the frosty air. Although the direct rays of the sun were fierce, the attenuated atmosphere received but little heat during the day; and the consequence was, that the moment these rays were withdrawn, either by the intervention of a stratum of clouds, or the falling of night, an unmitigated cold set in. The radiation and dispersion of the heat absorbed by the soil were rapid, for the same reason.

As we approached the hacienda of San Vicenzio, an agreeable change came over the face of the scenery. The aridity of the soil disappeared. Small streams of water issued from the mountain sides—which we were skirting—and winding their way through, and irrigating the plain, produced a rich carpeting of grass, on which were feeding herds of cattle and flocks of sheep—pleasant objects of contemplation for an invading army, which was henceforth to depend upon the country for subsistence. The hacienda of San Vicenzio itself, was one of the neatest we had seen in Mexico. The houses of the *quasi* slaves were built of the limestone so abundant throughout the plain, and were whitewashed, and presented otherwise the appearance of thrift and comfort. We beheld here, in proximity with a neat little church, the novel spectacle, for Mexico, of a school-house. One league farther, and we arrived at our destined camping place, Ojo de Agua. This is a mere hostel and corral surrounded by a few of the comfortless huts of the Indian laborers, belonging to the place. It takes its name—eye of water—from a remarkable fountain, which, gushing out of the ground in great volume, forms, at its very source, a respectable rivulet. From this point, a beautiful and extensive savanna, covered with the richest verdure, extends for many miles southward, until it is bounded by the distant mountains. The meandering of the little stream, and its fertilizing effects, may be traced to a great distance; and the beauty of the landscape is much increased by several isolated hills that rise abruptly and picturesquely from the bosom of this sea of waving grass, and are crowned with cultivation and with forest trees. Toward night, a

keen wind from the north-west, aided by an overcast and murky sky, made it so cool, that we found another application of our *serapes* necessary. The supplies of the place, in the way of food, were meager, being limited to fresh beef, which we had caused to be killed after our arrival; but as we of the quarter-master's department traveled with a baggage wagon of our own, into which was now and then thrust an unfortunate fowl, as one could be picked up on the road—duly paid for, according to general orders—and as Auguste had found a regular *cocina*, wherein to light his fire and unpack his pots and kettles, we were entirely independent of the state of the provision market, and of the hotel accommodations of the place; which latter were at about zero. The same party of lancers which we had flushed at Tepeahualco, again gave spurs to their horses, as we approached this place.

The Indian population of Ojo de Agua—we saw only three or four white persons—were rude and fierce-looking savages, scowling as much as they dared in our presence. Indeed, the population of the whole country between Jalapa and this point, seemed to be very inimical to us; and if they had but added courage to this feeling, so as to dignify it into patriotism, it might have challenged our respect; but it seemed to be the effect of ignorant prejudice, and of a feeling of caste; which latter feeling, indeed, we found very strong, even among the more enlightened classes.

Having dispatched a smoking breakfast of beefsteak and coffee, we were in the saddle, the next day, at our usual hour. The morning, as the mornings had been for several days previous, was cool and cloudy, and the scenery was shorn of half its beauty, by dull banks of vapor, that obscured the neighboring mountains. Orizaba alone reared his tall peak above the region of clouds. One league from Ojo de Agua we passed the hacienda of San José, where was a remarkably neat church, with a well turned dome covered with Dutch tiles, whose vivid and various colors gave it a pleasing effect. The country on both sides of us was now much improved in aspect. Cultivation began to be more frequent, and flourishing fields of young corn, extending over many acres, occasionally greeted and gladdened the eye, hitherto wearied with roaming over barren and unproductive wastes. A ride of a couple of hours brought us to the town of *Napolucan*—the avenue lead-

ing to which was agreeably flanked by fruit, and other trees. We observed here, the graceful, feathery mimosa, which we afterward found so abundant in the valley of Mexico. Napolucan is situated on a gentle eminence overlooking an extensive plain. It is a straggling village, and the gardens and streets are hedged in by the maguey, giving it a unique and picturesque effect. A large well-built church was the only structure of any moment. Beside some eight or ten houses of stone, used principally as *cafés* and *fondas*, the remainder of the habitations were miserable huts, filled with an indigent population. In the midst of this fine agricultural region, we could not but be struck with wonder at the squalor and wretchedness displayed by these poor people. Princely haciendas arose, like so many Italian villas, in various directions, as the eye glanced over the plain, giving evidence of luxury and wealth in their proprietors, while the poor helot of an Indian, the "hewer of wood and the drawer of water" to these extensive domains, scarcely possessed wherewith to cover his nakedness. I was tempted to exclaim with Madam Roland, "Oh! liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" We found at the door of one of the fondas, a man armed with an *escopeta*—a kind of short musket—whom we at first made prisoner, but afterward released; taking away from him his weapon, for which he begged hard, declaring that he only intended it for the defense of his hacienda against robbers. He had come in, he said, to engage a company of ten or a dozen men to defend him against his own countrymen!

Descending from the hill on which Napolucan is situated, we entered upon an extensive and well-cultivated plain, that spread out for many leagues on either hand, and ran as far as the eye could reach into the gorges of the mountains. As we wound through this plain and over occasional slopes, scenes of peculiar beauty and grandeur continually presented themselves. Indeed, on these elevated tables of the interior of Mexico, traversed as they are in every direction, by ranges of lofty mountains, new beauties are continually bursting upon the sight of the astonished and delighted traveler. On the apex of another small eminence, over which our road ran, we passed the hacienda of *Floresta*; consisting, as usual, of a church, a corral, and a cluster of small houses. We purchased here a supply of food for our horses.

Leaving this hacienda, our road wound round the base of a mountain called the *Pinal*, for two or three miles. At the *venta del Pinal*—a small inn—we halted for an hour to rest and water our animals. We obtained here a cup of coffee, and a lunch of fried eggs and frijoles—which viands the landlord, who had received timely notice of our expected arrival, had already prepared for us. The approach of the “invading army” had no terrors for landlords, as we always left them with replenished coffers.

Soon after leaving the *venta*, we entered the pass of the *Pinal*; which is another of those defiles that guard the road to Mexico. The mountain of the *Pinal*, along the base of which we were traveling, rose abruptly on our left, while a *barranca*, or ravine, that formed the bed of a mountain torrent—now dry—skirted the road on the right. The scenery resembled that of many parts of our Alleghany mountains. This pass is famous, in the legends of travelers, for the many robberies which have been committed in it, by the bandits who infest the neighborhood. The line of road between Perote and Tepeahualco, and the pass of the *Pinal* are the two points most dreaded by wayfarers, in their passage to and from the capital, and they usually procure escorts of the military to enable them to pass these points in safety.

We met here the Spanish consul-general, running away from the capital with his family, to avoid the anticipated horrors of war. His party occupied several antique, lumbering coaches, drawn by four and six mules each, and was escorted by a few Mexican lancers, and half a dozen of our dragoons, whom General Worth had detailed for the purpose, in Puebla. By the hands of one of these, General Scott received a dispatch from General Worth, informing him that the enemy was gathering in force near the city of Mexico, and threatened us with another battle. The news would have been received with three cheers, but for the restraints of discipline, and the presence of the general.

A short distance beyond the *Pinal*, we passed a hacienda, which one of the many acts of treachery of Santa Anna had rendered somewhat famous. Having defeated General Mexia, in one of the revolutions of the country, he afterward decoyed him to an interview here, through the mediation of a friend, and basely shot him, in cold blood!

About four o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the pleasantly situated town of *Acajete*, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and encamped in it for the night. We took up our quarters in a private house, with a grocery-store or grog-shop under the same roof, where there was plenty of *aguardiente* and garlic for sale. We sat down to dinner in an hour after our arrival, so expert had Auguste become in performing his important part of the duties of the campaign; and after dinner, Seymour spread me a capital bed on the dinner table. Our horses were picketed in the yard with the ducks and chickens and the family donkey. There were no less than three large churches in this small village. We visited the principal of these in the course of our afternoon stroll, and inspected the usual quantity of carving and gilding, and bad painting. The building itself was venerable for its antiquity, and was prettily situated on one side of the plaza, which was covered with an inviting green-sward, on which a troop of our cavalry had encamped. The horses picketed in double lines, the white tents, contrasting with the sward beneath, the camp-fires, and the moving to and fro of the "bold dragoons," presented an animated and pleasing picture. We had quite a levee, after nightfall, in the general's quarters; the *cura* and other dignitaries being present. The *cura* was anxious to know whether the Catholic worship was *openly* tolerated in the United States, and one of the lay gentlemen inquired whether we had not the agreeable and convenient custom of marrying for six months at a time! We were astonished at the ignorance displayed by these people, on the most common questions of geography and history. They had, no doubt, called on the general to see for themselves, whether he was the Alaric or the Attila, they heard him represented to be. We killed here several beeves for the troops, and the poor Indians gathered around, as the process was going on, to beg for the offal!

We were again in motion at eight o'clock the next morning. It had snowed, during the night, on the top of the Malinche, at the base of which is situated Acajete, and a keen north-wind rendered the weather quite cold—so much so, that we wrapped ourselves, at starting, in our overcoats and serapes. As we rose a slight eminence, soon after leaving Acajete, the splendid view of the volcanoes of Puebla burst upon us, and after the first exclamations of

surprise and admiration had passed, we rode along for some time in silence, absorbed by the grandeur of the spectacle. Ahead of us, rose the majestic *Popocatepetl*, to the height of 17,700 feet above the level of the sea; and a little to the right, *Iztaccihuatl*, to the height of 15,700; the former presenting the appearance of a regular cone, with some two thousand feet from its summit downward, covered with snow, and the latter, a nearly horizontal serrated ridge, on which the snow lay fantastically piled, like so many fleecy clouds. The rays of the morning sun gave a brilliant and dazzling effect to these snow-crested peaks of the Andes, and the nearer landscape was exceedingly picturesque; an extensive valley running away many leagues to the left, between receding mountains, well cultivated in maize and barley, and broken by occasional patches of woodland. The barley—it was now the 28th of May—was just beginning to indicate, by its golden hue, its fitness for the sickle. On our right, the country was more uneven in surface, and was cut up into small fields by hedges of maguey.

A ride of two hours and a half, brought us to the thrifty little manufacturing town of *Amosque*, which contained about two thousand inhabitants, and was the largest village we had passed through since leaving Perote. It is celebrated, more than any other locality in Mexico, for its manufacture of spurs; and most of us availed ourselves of the opportunity of arming our heels anew with this knightly appendage. They are made entirely by hand, without the aid of other than the most simple machinery, and some of them were very fair specimens of art, being fancifully and ingeniously inlaid with gold and silver. The rowels were enormously large, some of them measuring an inch and a half in diameter. I am not sure but Seymour's, who began now to ape the air of a dragoon, and who had picked out the largest pair he could find, measured even more. We spent the hour we halted here very agreeably, in wandering through the different spur and saddle manufactories, and in inspecting, in company with the general and the padre, the principal church.

In the yard of this neat and well-kept building, were several magnificent yew trees, which grew to a great height and attracted our attention by being covered with a beautiful creeper filled with

scarlet flowers, called the *yedra*; the two thus formed a living cone of green and red in striking contrast. The interior of the edifice was rich in paintings—many of them of merit—and in ornaments of gold and silver; and the padre took evident pride in showing us through its various parts, and pointing out to us the objects of most interest. The inhabitants of Amosoque received us with something like cordiality—probably due to General Worth's popular rule in Puebla, only ten miles distant, and which he had occupied two weeks before—paying General Scott, in particular, marked respect, as he passed through the streets, and not unfrequently stopping to gaze with evident admiration upon his large and commanding figure.

The country from Amosoque to Puebla, is quite uninteresting, if we except the magnificent mountain scenery already described. The road runs through a region almost entirely devoid of cultivation, being flanked on the left by ranges of barren and sun burned hills, and on the right by a valley which, with the exception of an occasional patch of maize or field of indifferent barley, was almost as forbidding in aspect. Large masses of porphyritic rock—the substratum of the whole valley or plain of Puebla is porphyry—now became frequent, fragments of it rendering the road exceedingly rough for the wagons. We caught our first view of Puebla from a slight eminence, some six miles from the city. The effect was not at all imposing; the city being situated in a plain, and but a small portion of it being visible. It is unfavorably contrasted, too, with natural objects of extraordinary grandeur and sublimity. Standing in the midst of an almost boundless plain, and at the base, as it appears at first sight, of the giant volcano Popocatepetl, it dwindles to a mere point in the landscape, and becomes comparatively insignificant. The most prominent object, upon approaching it, is the church of "Our Lady of Loretto," situated on an isolated hill on the right of the road, and within good mortar-range of the plaza. Our flag floated proudly from this eminence, and several pieces of artillery frowned from its battlements; General Worth having taken possession of it, and stationed a small garrison in the church, the better to hold the city in check. The walls were lined with our troops, looking down upon us an affectionate welcome, as we rode past.

We now entered upon a splendid causeway, flanked on either side by pillars of porphyry, and were very soon afterward joined by generals Worth and Quitman, accompanied by a numerous *cortège* of officers, all superbly mounted, and glittering in the blue and gold of their undress uniforms. The greeting of the generals was cordial, and as this gay cavalcade, arrayed in the "pomp and panoply of war," intermingled with our travel-worn and dust-covered escort, the contrast was striking. In the suburbs of the city we passed through one of the seven *garitas*, or internal custom-house gates, that serve, in Puebla, as elsewhere in Mexico, to harass and destroy the inland commerce of the country; and soon afterward we came upon the *Alameda*, on our right. The latter part of our day's ride had been over a dusty road, and beneath the rays of a scorching sun, and the sight of splendid avenues of linden trees, green-sward, and the running streams of water, that meander through this city-forest, gave it a peculiar charm. We had now, indeed, entered an oasis. Opposite to the *Alameda* stands the imposing church of *San José*, whose spire is remarkable, both for its symmetry and great height. Beneath some fine shade-trees, in front of this building, a regiment of infantry was drawn up, as a guard of honor, to receive the general-in-chief. As we rode past, this corps of veterans "presented arms," at the roll of the drum, and the general gracefully uncovered himself in return for the courtesy. This ceremony over, a fine band of music struck up, and as its martial tones reverberated through the streets, commingled with the scarcely less musical clanking of sabres, and clattering of hoofs over the pavements, I sat more erect in my saddle and experienced a glow of pride, such as an American might be supposed to feel, on so proud an occasion. We were now in the heart of the enemy's territory, and in secure possession of the second city of the republic. Those of us who had not before visited Puebla, were struck with its great size, and the imposing appearance of its well-built streets; the splendor of its shops, the rattling of its coaches—a thing new to us, in Mexico—the general air of business and activity everywhere prevalent; and above all, with the picturesque *coup d'œil* of both town and people—the balconies and house-tops being crowded with spectators. The general and suite alighted at the



government house, where General Worth had prepared a splendid banquet in honor of the occasion. The reader will be surprised to be told, that General Scott's whole escort consisted of but two hundred and sixty dragoons! With this small force he had performed the entire march from La Hoya, leaving General Twiggs so far in the rear, after the first day's march, as to be entirely beyond "supporting distance." It would have been no small triumph for the enemy to have captured General Scott; but, as the reader has seen, no attempt was made to molest us.

The plain of Puebla lies at an average elevation of seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and is rather nearer to the Atlantic than to the Pacific ocean. It is, in proportion to extent, one of the most populous states of the Mexican confederacy, containing about fifty inhabitants to the square mile. But populous as it is, comparatively with the rest of the republic, it does not contain, by several hundred thousand, as many inhabitants as it did in the days of Cortez. The plowshare is now passed over the ruins of towns and villages, that were prosperous and powerful during the war of "the conquest." The towns of *Tlascala* and *Cholula*—the former situated about twenty-five miles north of the modern city of Puebla, and the latter six miles west—with their respective territories, were at that day formidable and rival states, maintaining armies, and carrying on wars on a scale, that would do no discredit to modern nations of much more considerable extent. In one of his letters to Charles V, Cortez describes the city of *Tlascala* as being superior to Granada, in Spain (then recently conquered from the Moors), in point of size and population, in the style of its houses, and in the abundance of the necessaries of life. Thirty thousand people, he said, might have been seen daily trafficking in the market-place. It was a sort of Lacedæmon in the new world. Its people were poor, warlike, temperate, and honest; coping with the great city of Mexico itself, and manfully maintaining their independence; while the other nations around them were being successively subdued by the all-powerful Aztecs, under the lead of the great Montezuma. The form of their government was republican; the chief executive and legislative power being lodged in a senate of more or less popular organization. They at first refused Cortez leave to pass through their

territory, and raised an army to oppose him, but being defeated in several engagements, they finally concluded a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with him; and when this great captain marched to the siege of Mexico, they supplied him with a quota of twenty thousand men. His conquest of Mexico was mainly due to the assistance he derived from these people; and for many years afterward, when the great mass of the native population had been reduced to the servitude of *encomiendas* and *repartimientos*, they were allowed, in gratitude for these services, many privileges that were withheld from the other Indians. It was those hardy inhabitants of the plain of Tlascala who performed, for their great ally, the extraordinary feat of cutting and fashioning, in their mountains—under the superintendence of Spanish ship-carpenters—the frames of the fleet of galleys, which, to the astonishment of the Mexicans, was afterward launched upon the lakes, and of carrying those huge pieces of timber on their shoulders to Tezcooco, where they were put together. The staunch little republic numbered, at that time, five hundred thousand inhabitants. The town of Tlascala still exists, surrounded by the dilapidated walls which defended it in that day; but instead of “thirty thousand traffickers in the market-place,” the total population has dwindled to between four and five thousand!

The ancient city of *Cholula*, the enemy of Tlascala, was also a renowned and populous city at the time of the conquest. It contained, according to Bernal Diaz, forty thousand houses; which, allowing five inhabitants for each house, would give it two hundred thousand inhabitants; rather more than there are in the city of Mexico at the present day. It was a sort of Mecca (*Quetzalcoatl*, or the white man who had taught the Aztecs civilization, having been last seen here, as the Indians believed), and contained the enormous number of five hundred religious temples, to which the natives were wont to resort to offer up their sacrifices, at certain seasons of the year, from all parts of the kingdom. Commerce was blended with religion, and extensive fairs for the sale of all kinds of merchandise were held at the same time. Cholula excelled all competitors in manufactures and the arts. Her cotton goods, earthenware, jewels, and other products, were celebrated throughout the land. The notorious massacre, perpetrated here

by Cortez, is, no doubt, familiar to the reader. Under the belief, real or pretended, that the people, whose guest he was, meditated treachery against him, he put six thousand of them to the sword; and partially burned, and sacked the city, carrying off with him all the jewels, and gold and silver he could lay his hands upon! The ancient glory of Cholula has departed, but the city still exists—its population having dwindled to between two and three thousand!

As of Tlascala and Cholula, so of other places once populous and important on the plain of Puebla—their inhabitants have ceased to exist; and the modern Mexican plants his corn and his barley on the graves of the departed generations. Much of the soil, that must have been cultivated, anciently, to sustain so great a population, now lies waste and fallow. In the various mutations of time, new towns have sprung up, and commerce has opened for itself new channels; but improvement has not kept pace with change; and if civilization is to be measured by the aggregate of happiness it produces, we may question whether the new civilization is superior to the old.

Puebla still maintains its superiority, as a manufacturing district, over the rest of the republic. Its temperate climate, enjoyed by means of its elevation, its abundant agricultural supplies, and the best of water-power in every direction, give it every facility for becoming the great workshop of Mexico. Its chief products now, as in the days of the prosperity of Cholula, are cotton yarn, and cotton cloth; both of which it produces of very good quality. In the whole of Mexico, there were in operation in 1844, 117,531 spindles—being an increase on the year before, of 10,823—and 2609 looms. Of these, Puebla possessed 38,094 spindles, and five hundred and thirty looms. The operatives work fourteen hours a day, and the average product of a spindle is five hanks—thirteen hanks making a pound—so that the total daily product (throughout the republic) amounts to 43,149 pounds; which gives for the annual product—reckoning, as the manufacturers do, three hundred working days to the year—twelve millions, nine hundred and forty-four thousand, and seventy pounds of yarns, valued at \$6,472,350 00. The total consumption of the raw material amounts to 14,239,000 pounds, or, estimating three hundred

pounds to the bale, to 47,464 bales. The number of pieces of cotton cloth produced, is, in round numbers, 500,000. These figures are taken from the memorial of the General Directory of National Industry, for the year 1845, and, of course, only present a view of the products of organized manufactories, as officially returned. To these, a large addition must be made for the products consumed in the place of production, and of which no return is made, and for the results of private industry; almost every hacienda, in Mexico, being a domestic manufactory, for the production of articles of prime necessity.

This branch of manufacturing industry has received great impetus within the last few years, the legislature extending to it, as has been before remarked, a degree of protection, amounting to an absolute prohibition of foreign competition. This mode of fostering and building up a particular branch of industry, at the expense, in the beginning, of other interests, is, perhaps, less objectionable in Mexico than in other states, from the nature and configuration of the country. There are no large rivers to afford facilities for commerce. Canals and railroads to connect the tablelands with the sea-coast, are, to a greater or less extent, impracticable; and hence, an entire stagnation of the agricultural interest must ensue, unless the superfluous hands employed in this branch of industry be withdrawn, and established in manufacturing and other pursuits, so as to counteract, at the same time, the tendency to over-production, and to ensure an inland market to the farmer and grazier. Mexico, for the want of facilities for transportation, exports nothing of bulk; and unless, therefore, she can consume her agricultural products herself, her surpluses will rot on the hands of the producers. Not only will this be so, but in the midst of abundance, the indigence of large numbers who will be incapable of finding employment, must necessarily ensue. The reader, who has patiently accompanied me in my tedious march from Jalapa, has already witnessed the verification of this truth.

But the rapid growth of the manufactories of Mexico, has outstripped the capacity of the country to supply them with the raw material. Cotton is produced principally in the four states of *Vera Cruz*, *Oaxaca*, *Jalisco*, and *Michoacan* (in the *tierras calientes*),

and the crops have hitherto been anything but encouraging. In 1844, the entire crop amounted to but two millions of pounds, or six hundred and sixty bales! Four-fifths of that quantity was produced in Vera Cruz and Oaxaca; the crops having failed entirely in the states of Jalisco and Michoacan. Nor was this an unusual accident, as the early and drenching rains, the worm, and high winds, frequently prove destructive to the hopes of the planter. In the prefecture of Acapulco, in this year, there were planted 3850 bushels of seed, and the total yield was only 447,500 pounds of seed cotton, which, at six cents per pound—its value in the market—was worth \$26,850. The cost of cultivation amounted to the sum of \$146,400!

Indeed, so discouraging have been the efforts, hitherto, to produce cotton in the *tierra caliente*, for the reasons I have assigned, that the planters are talking of abandoning its culture altogether in this region, and of removing to states farther north, as to *Durango* and *Coahuila*; where, from experiments partially made, there seems to be more hope of success. These states resemble more nearly, in their climate and physical peculiarities, the cotton-growing states of our Union, and the plant may, no doubt, be domesticated here, to a greater or less extent. Its cultivation on the interior plateaus of the Cordilleras, as in the plains of Puebla and Mexico, has thus far signally failed—the climate being far too cold. The tree-cotton, which has more capacity to resist frost, flourishes here, and attempts are being made to propagate it. A single shrub of it has been known to yield, in a season, fourteen pounds. It is long-lived, there being trees in the country twenty-five years old, yields a wool of long staple, and owing to the little care required in its cultivation, may, some day, become a source of limited supply.

It is thus seen that Mexico will have great difficulties to encounter, in her efforts to build up a manufacturing system of her own in this important branch. She will have of necessity to depend, for a series of years to come, if not indefinitely, upon a foreign supply of the raw material. If she were to throw open her ports to the free admission of the article, we could supply her with it cheaper, perhaps, than she will ever be able to produce it; and although this would interfere somewhat with her system of

being her own producer as well as consumer, it would nevertheless give a great impetus to her industry, and redound much to the national prosperity. But, unfortunately, her policy is hampered with antagonistic interests, and the cotton planter, as well as the manufacturer, demands protection. It is not denied that he ought, equally with the manufacturer, to have this, but the amount of the protection has been, and still is, the great bone of contention between them. The manufacturers are willing to adopt a sort of sliding-scale, by which the price may be kept up to *twenty-four cents per pound*, but the planters complain that this would not enable them to realize a sufficient profit; and they have hitherto carried their point, to the great injury of the manufacturing interest.

Considerable attention is paid, in Mexico, to the manufacture of woolen goods, necessary at all seasons of the year on the great plains. All the coarse fabrics of this description, and many of the fine cassimeres consumed in the country, are the products of native looms. The tables of the Cordilleras and the highlands of the northern states, are eminently adapted to the growing of wool; and Mexico will, no doubt, if she persevere, excel in this department of manufacture. In *San Miguel de Allende* alone, they already manufacture *serapes* and other blankets, to the amount, annually, of \$133,153. There are several of these manufactories in Puebla. Silk is manufactured to a considerable extent in Michoacan, in the city of Mexico, and in Puebla, but it requires also, the protection of the government. The manufacture of paper has been introduced into the country within a few years past, and a large factory established at Puebla. It is called *La Beneficencia*, from the circumstance of the hospital for the poor of the city being principally interested in it. It employs eighty laborers—twenty of whom are boys, and twenty women, with two foreign superintendents. It works eighteen hours a day, and produces, daily, forty reams of printing paper, of the size of that used by the larger newspapers. The company designs extending its operations, so as to include other descriptions of paper, but its difficulty is the want of rags, which are not to be had in the country, of a suitable kind, and in sufficient quantities. As it is only paupers who sell rags, probably, these will not have suffi-

cient influence to demand the exclusion of the foreign article ; and if this be admitted free, the company thinks it will be enabled to import it, to advantage. I visited several of the porcelain manufactories of Puebla. Very creditable wares are produced in some of them ; and this branch of industry, at least, requires no protection from the government. For the manufacture of soap, Puebla has peculiar advantages, as indeed has also the city of Mexico ; an excellent substitute for potash, which enters so extensively into the manufacture of this article, being found in great abundance on the plain of the one, and in the neighborhood of the lakes of the other. On the plain of Puebla, it is not known whether this ingredient is evolved by the gradual decay of the volcanic remains which lie scattered in various localities, or is the result of the slow action of salt upon lime. The earth is saturated with it, and it can be extracted and sold at about one-fifth the price of the potash of the United States.

Beside the larger manufactories of Puebla, there are hundreds of shops in different parts of the city, in which the busy artisan plies his trade on a small scale. Hats, shoes, harness, saddles, jewelry, etc., are manufactured to a considerable extent, and exported to various parts of the republic. The artisans are, for the most part, Indians, and conduct almost all their operations by hand, with but little or no aid from machinery. In wandering through the city, I have often stopped to witness their slow and patient processes. An artist would sometimes be an hour and more in performing an operation which, by the aid of machinery, he could have accomplished in a minute. The saddlers, for instance, emboss almost all the leather used in the manufacture of their saddles, and other horse caparisons, and much of it elaborately. Instead of having proper dies, and a press moved by machinery, which would enable them to strike off a square yard or so, at a time, with the utmost patience and perseverance, they stamp the material with the hammer and a variety of small steel implements, inch by inch. They reminded me constantly of the Chinese, in the ingenuity they displayed in their several trades, and in the minuteness and elaborateness of their labor. Without genius to originate, they are apt imitators ; and under proper masters, and with a little more philosophy in aid of their

several arts, they would, no doubt, become expert and highly productive workmen. One is struck with the great quantity of saddles manufactured everywhere in Mexico. Indeed, all the world travels on horseback in this country; on mountain and plain alike, and in proportion to the universality of the practice, are the skill and ingenuity required in the adornment of the animal. Every one who mounts a horse at all, mounts him *en caballero*—as a cavalier—and be he gentle or plebeian, he must have a certain amount of finery for his steed. I inspected a saddle in one of the shops, which the maker, who was putting the finishing touches upon it, told me would cost eight hundred dollars; nor was this by any means an unusual price. Stirrups of massive silver are frequently used, and jewels and ornaments of gold are not at all uncommon.

Particular streets, or rather parts of streets, are devoted, each to its particular trade—the saddlers and harness-makers congregating in one street, the shoemakers in another, the hatters in another, the workers in silk and embroidery in another, etc.

Beside the importance which Puebla derives from her manufactures, the city is situated in one of the finest grazing and agricultural regions of the earth. In its climate and productions, it resembles more the state of Pennsylvania, or Ohio, than a district of country in the torrid zone. Indian-corn, and other cereals flourish in perfection; and herds of the finest beef-cattle range over meadows little less boundless in extent than our western prairies. So happy, too, is the location of this famous plain with regard to the *tierras calientes*—particularly to those on the Pacific side—that it is within less than a day's journey of all the products of the tropics! On the other hand, a ride of a few hours carries you into the region of perpetual snow! So that Puebla may be literally said to have within its reach all the known climates, and almost all the natural productions of the earth. With all these advantages of location; with great equability of temperature throughout the year; with a constant succession of crops, and with the brilliant, transparent, and elastic atmosphere peculiar to great elevations in the torrid zone, we cannot wonder that the plain of Puebla was the chosen Mecca of the ancient Aztecs, and was described by Cortez and



his enthusiastic followers, as little less than a paradise, fit for the residence of the gods.

A visit to the market-place, in this region of Ceres and Pomona, on a Sunday morning—Sunday being the principal market day—affords a novel and interesting spectacle. It is held in the principal plaza of the city—there being no *market-houses* in Mexico, as I have before remarked—having the cathedral on one side, and the *cabildo* on the other, and covers several acres of ground. It has the appearance, as you approach it, of a busy encampment of Arabs. Each of the venders, or rather, each family of venders, for the whole family seems to come to market, the donkey, the dog, and all, has his little tent, formed by the *petate* of the country, thrown over a ridge-pole sustained by upright sticks, and hanging like curtains on either side. Beneath this he takes shelter, with his effects, from the sun and rain. The gaily dressed—for even the market women love their finery, such as it is; and then the reader must recollect that it is Sunday morning—and picturesque multitude, among which trip the tidy-looking housemaid, and the spruce *mozo* of the city, with their little market baskets of the palm-leaf in their hands, are moving about in crowds, and threading their way beneath and among these rude awnings, while at their feet lie piles upon piles of the richest and most luscious-looking fruits and vegetables. Flowers are intermingled with fruits, and with a little assistance from the fancy, one might imagine himself looking upon a rich offering to the goddesses of fruits and flowers, sent to them from all quarters of the habitable earth, rather than upon the productions of a few square leagues; for within reach of his eye, if he take his station at any one point of the market-place, he will behold the apple, the pear, the peach, the plum, and the cherry of the *tierras templadas*, commingled in rich profusion, with the pine-apple, the banana, the orange, the maméy, the chirimoya, etc., etc., of the *tierras calientes*. We had about eight thousand men quartered in the city during our stay; and the addition of this number of mouths to the ordinary population of the place, seemed to make no difference whatever in the abundance of the supplies; which, as the reader has seen, was also the case at Jalapa.

Approaching Puebla by the road from Vera Cruz, the traveler does not see the fertile plains on which this great abundance is produced. They lie northward, on the roads to Tlascala and Mexico; westward in the direction of Cholula; and south-westward toward the slopes of the Pacific. From these luxuriant harvest-fields, the grains are gathered into Puebla, where extensive grist-mills convert them into flour; which we subsisted our troops upon, at as cheap a rate, notwithstanding the war, as the same article could have been purchased for, in New Orleans. Unfortunately, for the want of roads, rivers, and canals, before alluded to, all this agricultural wealth is locked up within the Cordilleras, without the possibility of exit; and, if production be carried beyond a certain point, perishes on the hands of the producer.

All this abundance is produced, too, by the most primitive and slovenly system of cultivation imaginable. In the vicinity of a large city like Puebla, containing about sixty thousand inhabitants, one would naturally expect to find, in this department of industry, all the improvements in processes and implements, which we have introduced into the United States. But so far from this being the case, the agriculturist of the present day does not appear to be a whit farther advanced, either in the science or the art of his calling, than he was a thousand years ago, on the plains of Seville and Madrid. He reaps immense fields of wheat and barley with the reap-hook, instead of using the scythe and cradle, and sometimes even pulls up the plant by the roots! The plow, the reader has already had described to him, it being little better than a sharpened beam of wood drawn by oxen, and requiring two persons to handle it, one to manage the instrument, and the other to drive the team. But in a country where there are no markets, and where lands are fertile, and labor cheap and abundant, but little better can be expected.

The average price of labor is about a *real* and a half a day—eighteen cents—and this is not always paid in money. The great majority of Indian laborers, on the larger haciendas, are in a much worse condition than the slaves of our southern states. I have described them, generally, in a previous page; but it may not be uninteresting to point out the process here, by which,

although enjoying, nominally, all the privileges of freemen, they are, in fact, reduced to a galling and life-long servitude. The owners of the *haciendas* first contrive ingeniously to get them in debt, by advancing them a small sum of money. A young Indian born on an estate, for instance, having reached the age of maturity, wishes to get married, but has not the means to provide himself with suitable apparel, and make certain customary presents to the parents of his bride. He applies to the *amo*—master—who, with apparent liberality, advances him the requisite sum. In due time he brings home his bride, but being in debt to the *amo*, he must go to work to repay him. He cannot earn much at a real and a half a day; and in the meantime he wants a new shirt, and his wife a new gown; but having no money to purchase them, he must have recourse to the *amo* again—who keeps a store for the supply of his estate, and is thus a sort of licensed sutler. The *amo* is content with reasonable profits, and does not charge him more than two or three hundred per cent. on first cost. By and by, children come, with their little wants, and as is frequently the case, the Indian himself becomes intemperate. His fate is now sealed, and he is bound hand and foot for life. He cannot leave his present master, as no one would employ him while his debt continues. If he desert, he will be apprehended and sent back, by the next magistrate, or imprisoned for his debt, until he will be glad to return to his servitude again. This system of slavery is called, in Mexico, the *mozo* system; and, in Yucatan, I was more than once applied to, by likely young Indians, to buy them of their *amos*, for the small sum of thirty or forty dollars!\*

This is the boasted freedom of the Mexican soil, about which there has been so much senseless declamation in our congress,

---

\* How forcibly does not this state of things recall to our minds a passage of Cæsar (*lib vi, de Bello Gall.*), written two thousand years ago, when speaking of the Gauls: "The common people are almost on a level with the slaves; of themselves they venture nothing; their voice is of no avail. There are many of that class, who, loaded with debts and tributes, or oppressed by the powerful, give themselves up into servitude to the nobles, who exercise over those who have thus delivered themselves up, the same rights as over slaves."

since the conclusion of the war. The well-fed and well-cared-for dependent of a southern estate, with us, is infinitely superior, in point both of physical and moral condition, to the *mozo* of the Mexican hacienda. The "hewers of wood and drawers of water" are slaves everywhere, as I have found; and whether the slave is so, *lege scripta*, or *lege necessitatis*, is, as the lawyers say, a distinction without a difference.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**DESCRIPTION** of Puebla continued—The houses—the streets—the multitude—Singular manner of naming streets—The aguadores, or water-carriers—Snow and ice from the volcanoes—The grand plaza—The entry of General Worth into this plaza, and the extraordinary scene which there ensued—The cathedral—The burial-place of the bishops—The portraits of these, for three hundred years back—A visit to the palace of the archbishop—Gallery of paintings, and library of this establishment—Feast of Corpus Christi—A grand high mass in the cathedral—The clergy of Puebla—The churches and convents—The *Paseos*—The Tivoli, and its amusements—Social circles; manners, customs, etc.

HAVING thus cast a rapid glance at the plain of Puebla, and incidentally at the city also, in a politico-economic light, let us now look more particularly at the latter, in a social view, and indulge in a little of the gossip of the traveler. The city is neatly and compactly built, and presents a very imposing *tout ensemble*. The streets tend to the cardinal points of the compass, and of course cross each other at right angles. They are wide and well paved, but have most incommodious side-walks—these scarcely sufficing for two or three persons to walk abreast on them. The streets have no names, or rather too many names, as each square is perfectly independent of the rest, and has a name of its own. I am living at quartermaster “head-quarters,” in the *Calle del Reboso*—that is, the block or square in which we live is called by this name. The adjoining block is called *Calle de las Cruces*. There are therefore in our street, twenty or thirty other streets. A better system, for bewildering a stranger, could not have been devised. For my part, I never pretended to find my way to any part of the city by inquiry. I scoured it, in every direction, for the first few days after my arrival, and having mapped it out in my head, sailed afterward by well-known land-marks, as church steeples, etc. When Seymour was along, I generally made him “take the departure,” and “keep the reckoning.” He soon be-

came very expert in this kind of navigation, and would sometimes say to me, as we returned home, "We have passed the steeple of San José, sir, and made the *Cruces* on the starboard-bow; we're not far, now, from the *Reboso*." The houses are, many of them, lofty, and are built of stone; an abundance of the material being at hand in all directions—the whole substratum of the plain being, as the reader has been informed, of coarse porphyry, resembling granite in texture. Like all other Spanish, or Hispano-American houses, they are built round a *patio*, or open court. The lower story is appropriated to stables, coach-houses, kitchen, etc., the families residing on the upper floors. A corridor or *portales* run entirely around the patio, above and below, forming, in the upper stories, agreeable galleries, which are usually filled with flowers in vases. In those houses which can afford it, there is also a fountain in the center of the *patio*, ornamented with a tasteful *jet d'eau*. There are flowers in vases grouped around this also, which give the patio, as you enter it, the appearance of a flower garden. The *azoteas*, or tops of the houses, are flat, being covered with brick laid in cement, to make them water-tight, and having fancifully-decorated parapets running round them, to the height of three or four feet. Thus, when the massive doors are swung to, below, and securely bolted and barred—and they resemble the gates of a fortress—the Mexican is, in fact, as well as in law, "within his castle." And very effective castles our troops found them on many occasions. The street-fronts of the houses are exceedingly light and picturesque. The style of architecture is the *Arabesque*, copied by the Spaniards from the Moors, and much in use in Spain about the period of the conquest by Cortez. Many of the fronts of the houses are elaborated and adorned with moldings in plaster, and sculptures of stone in *bas-relief*, and have the tops of the walls fancifully painted and festooned with flowers. The facades are sometimes inlaid with fancy-colored tiles, which have a pleasing effect. Balconies project over the streets, from the doors and windows, tastefully railed with iron and painted some gay color. These balconies, filled with flowers, and with gaily-dressed women, and shaded by curtains and awnings of bright colors, give a remarkably picturesque effect to the streets; especially on fête days, and during public processions. The

streets themselves are filled, all day long, by a busy multitude, whose costumes, and modes of life, in connection with the quaint moresque style of the houses, would carry the beholder back, in imagination, some three centuries and a half in the history of Spain, but for a dashing dragoon or so, belonging to a newer race, and representing the progress of a newer civilization. The living and breathing "City of the Angels" has been almost as little modified by the lapse of time, and the passing of the stirring events around it, as the city of stone and mortar.

Puebla has many beautiful public squares, laid out and ornamented with taste. In the center of each square there is a fountain, for the supply of water free of charge, to the inhabitants; the water is conducted to these fountains from small streams descending from the neighboring highlands, and preserves so low a temperature, as to render the use of ice unnecessary. From the fountains, it is carried to the houses by a class of men called *aguadores*, who are a time-honored race in all Spanish cities, and hand down their profession from father to son. The *aguador* carries two enormous jars at a load—one slung behind him, with a leathern strap passing round the forehead, to keep it in position, and the other before him as a counterpoise. Thus loaded, with his body inclined forward at an angle of about thirty degrees from the perpendicular, and in a kind of amble between a walk and a trot, he may be seen passing to and fro, in his allotted beat or round, at all hours of the day, crying in a sort of monotone, "*Agua puro! agua puro! quien lo compra?*"—fresh water! fresh water! who'll buy? Beside these professional water-carriers, there are many Indian women and girls, who gather round these fountains, in their picturesque costumes, to supply their own wants, and those of their humble households; and it is curious to observe the agility and precision of step and movement with which they will balance their well-filled jars on their heads, without so much as spilling a drop.

Ice is brought for the supply of the *neverias*—ice-cream establishments—and the few private houses which indulge in the luxury, on the backs of donkeys, from the volcanoes of Popocatepetl, Iztaccihuatl, and the Malinche; and your host at a dinner party will sometimes pleasantly ask you, whether you will have your

wine cooled from the bosom of the "white woman" (Popocatepetl), or from the foot-stool of the "great spirit" (Malinche).

The most striking locality in the city, is the grand *plaza*, or *place d'armes*, situated near its center. It is here the market, before described, is held. A magnificent fountain, with a *jet d'eau*, stands in the center of it, and, close by, an unfinished monument designed to commemorate the invincibility of "Heroic Puebla." This monument will probably never be finished, after the memorable feat performed in this same square by General Worth.— This gallant officer, as is well known, with but four thousand men, threw himself boldly into the heart of the enemy's country, and took possession of the city of Puebla, on the 15th of May, 1847. His nearest supporting force was at Jalapa, the head-quarters of General Scott, and one hundred miles in his rear! Puebla contains, as I have before said, sixty thousand inhabitants; and at least ten thousand more from the surrounding country had flocked into the city to gratify their curiosity by looking upon the terrible *Americanos del Norte*, whose fame, really great, had come to them magnified, ten-fold, by the tongues of rumor. Amid this immense multitude, blocking up the streets, and filling house-tops and balconies, the small, but veteran army of Worth, weather-beaten and toil-worn, and covered with the dust of the road, patiently worked its way to the great *plaza*, where the soldiers, with that confidence in themselves and in their general which does so much honor to them both, stacked their arms, and laid themselves down quietly to sleep after the fatigue of their long march!

On one side of this plaza stands the government house, an immense building running the whole length of the square (six hundred feet), and designed for the accommodation of the state legislature, the governor, and the chief military and other officers. General Scott established his head-quarters here; and from the cupola, in the center of the building, our flag looked forth proudly, upon the same mountains, which three hundred years before had witnessed the wonderful deeds of the steel-clad warriors of the cross. On another side of this plaza stands the cathedral, whose massive walls cover an entire square, and whose dome and steeples towering above the surrounding buildings, are the first objects



to be descried, far away over the plain, as you approach the city. Its steeples are hung with enormous bells, that resound several miles beyond the city limits, as in the still hours of the night they mark, with solemn tone, the flight of time. As I have been awakened from a dreamy slumber, by these deep-mouthed messengers, I have, sometimes, fancifully connected them with the terrible gongs of the *teocalli*, or idol-temples of Mexico, so graphically described to us by Bernal Diaz, as proclaiming to Cortez and his besieging army, the awful preparations being made—generally at midnight—for the immolation of some unfortunate Spaniard, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

With the exception of the archiepiscopal cathedral in the city of Mexico, this church is said to be superior to any other in the country, in the style and execution of its architecture, and the richness of its decorations. It struck me as being very fine in all these particulars. The massive grandeur, and at the same time, simplicity of its exterior, produces an impressive and pleasing effect upon the beholder, heightened by the vastness and magnificence of the interior. Two rows of immense pillars of porphyry, hung with a rich scarlet velvet, support the well turned and ingeniously groined arches and dome, and divide the main building into three spacious aisles. The principal altar stands opposite the main entrance, on a raised dais, or platform of marble. It consists of marble slabs, of elaborate finish and polish, laid on a rectangular substructure of the same material, and of convenient height for the officiating priest. Above this, rise eight double fluted columns, of the Corinthian order, of the purest white marble, and with gilded capitals, supporting a light and tasteful dome, on the apex of which stands the golden figure of an angel, with outstretched wings. Within this again, rise eight other columns of alabaster, of the Doric order, and supporting, in like manner, a dome; so that the altar may be said to be canopied by two Grecian temples, of different orders, standing one within the other. On the altar itself are the massive silver candlesticks, with their waxen candles, measuring some three inches in diameter; the sculptured figures, the custodium and other adornments of a Catholic chapel. Rich carpets are spread over the dais on which stands the altar; and here, on high days and festivals, are celebrated the solemn

masses of the church. The symmetrical proportions of these two Grecian temples in miniature, and the richness of their sculptures, carvings and gildings, produce a wonderful effect upon the beholder. He involuntarily pauses to pay to this triumph of art, the homage of his admiration and reverence. Arranged around the body of the building, are more than thirty other altars ! all rich in carving, gilding and painting—the massive carving reaching to the ceiling, and striking the imagination by its grandeur, and the exceeding elaborateness of its execution. It is a fine sight, early on a Sunday morning, to behold all these altars lighted up at the same time, and a mass being said at each—each altar being, in fact, a church in itself, and gathering around it, its own circle of worshipers ! This will give the reader some idea of the magnitude of the building.

The imposing effect always produced on the mind, by architecture on a grand scale, is somewhat destroyed, however, by the injudicious location of the choir. This has been placed on the ground-floor, and in the center of the building ; thus breaking in upon its vastness, and destroying the grand *coup d'œil*, which it should be the first effort of an architect to produce—especially in buildings devoted to divine worship. Puritans may carp and cavil as they may, there can be no question that architecture, sculpture and painting, produce powerful devotional effects upon the worshiper, especially if he be a man of letters and refinement ; and it is as senseless to reject these aids, as it would be to exclude the orator from the pulpit. Why may not the imagination be appealed to through the eye as well as the ear ? The man who hears his Maker in the winds, and beholds him on the mountain-tops, should both see and hear him in the magnificence of his temples, and in the eloquence of his priests.

The choir corresponds, in the richness of its adornments, and in the grandeur of its proportions, with the rest of the building. It is railed in, and partially protected from the gaze of the multitude, by lattice-work and curtains. A gallery, elevated some thirty feet above the ground-floor, runs around the massive pillars which inclose the choir. This gallery is encircled by a light iron railing, or balustrade, fancifully painted, and forms, as it were, a second story to the choir. In this second story are placed two

splendid and richly-toned organs; and here, also, are stationed the professional singers—the clergy and laymen who join in the chorus or chant, being stationed below, where antique and richly-carved arm-chairs of mahogany are placed for their accommodation. An aisle, or passage-way, balustraded on both sides, leads from the choir to the main altar; and beneath the floor of the choir is the burial-place of the bishops of Puebla, where each incumbent of the holy office may view, in succession, the dreary vault provided for his mortal remains. The access to this catacomb of the dead, is through an immense brazen-gate, whose huge and massive dimensions convey well to the mind of the beholder, the idea, that when it is once closed upon the mortal remains of those who enter it, they are, indeed, “in that bourn whence no traveler returns.” In the three hundred and twenty odd years that have elapsed since the foundation of the city, Puebla has had a succession, including the present incumbent, of twenty-four bishops; thus giving to each one a period of service, as bishop, of thirteen years and a fraction. Some of these having returned to visit their native land at advanced ages, have laid their bones in the homes of their fathers; but most of them lie interred in this tomb. In the bishop’s palace may be seen arranged around the walls of an anteroom, the portraits of all these fathers of the church, from the first bishop and founder of the cathedral, who flourished contemporaneously with Cortez, and was installed soon after the conquest, to the present venerable and highly respected prelate, the Right Reverend Father Vasquez. The name of the first bishop was Garces—he was an Arragonian by birth, and laid the foundation of the cathedral in 1525, six years after the great city of *Tenochtitlan* had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Spaniards. It is curious to study the characters of these men, as they have been impressed upon the canvas. They are all robed in the vestments of the church, and are tonsured according to the discipline of the several orders of the priesthood to which they belonged. There is an air of piety visible in most of their faces—benevolence and good nature in some— austerity and harshness in others—while in a few you behold the mitred warriors of the age to which they belonged—making way for the dominion of the church by the dominion of the sword. I noticed,

among the rest, the portrait of the celebrated Palafox y Mendoza, who was both viceroy and bishop, early in the seventeenth century. There was more of the saint than the warrior in his countenance. Several jolly faces still bloomed freshly from the canvas, as though their possessors had not been unmindful of the creature comforts of their day.

A review of these portraits carried us back through the various stages of Spanish domination in the country, and the no less grievous domination of the modern republicans; affording us much food for reflection. We had before us the religious history of three centuries and a half, from the rebellion of Luther and Calvin against their churches, to the present generation, in which the christian doctrine, so simple in its origin, has been split and refined away by ambitious theorists, until men's minds have become bewildered; and the existence of a thousand different sects, admonishes us of the difficulty, if not of the absurdity, of attempting, by the aid of our reason alone, to find the "narrow way that leads to life eternal."

In company with a messmate and two or three other officers of the army, I visited, by appointment, the palace of the bishop. It is an immense quadrangle, covering nearly an entire square, and inclosing three large *patios*, in one of which were choice specimens of fruits and flowers. We here again saw the splendid creeper called the *yedra*, with which we had been so much struck at *Amosque*. It had climbed a tall pine, which it had so completely covered in every part, as not to leave a single leaf of the tree visible; and formed, as before, a living cone of the deepest green, dotted profusely with tiny scarlet flowers. Having entered the gateway of the principal *patio*, we ascended to the second story of the building, by a flight of wide stone steps, over one of the landings of which hung a painting most appropriate to adorn the threshold of a bishop's palace. It was the Virgin Mother and infant Saviour—the latter feeding a flock of sheep; thus admonishing the holy father, as often as he went forth into the world, of his duty to "feed his flock." Reaching the *portales*, or corridor of the second story, encircling the *patio* of the building, in which were hung also several paintings of a religious character (and but indifferent execution, as the reader might suppose, from

the exposed situation in which we found them), we were led through a room in which there was a specimen of the famous Gobelin tapestry; thence through another, containing the portraits of the bishops, before noticed; and finally into a suite of other rooms, where, to our astonishment and surprise, we found one of the largest and best collections of pictures in America. There were, save a piece or two by Murillo, one by Rubens, and one by Rafael, no originals of the great masters, but many copies which did no discredit to their famous pencils. We spent two hours in passing through these rooms, and had barely time to give a passing glance of admiration to the most celebrated pieces. The pictures, though generally of a religious caste, were not entirely so. We noticed several of quite a mundane character, as the exit of the three Graces from the bath; one of the nymphs playfully holding a mirror to the others, and all in such glorious *dishabille*, as would suffice, one would think, to quicken the lazy current of life in the veins even of an old bishop. There was a Magdalen, too, in which the lascivious, voluptuous woman was but imperfectly hid in the upturned eyes of the saint; and if two little cherubs, that looked as much like cupids as cherubs, presenting her with a wreath of flowers, had been blotted from the picture, one's imagination, instead of soaring aloft to heaven, would have been forcibly called down to earth. The coloring—save that the hair, as it flowed in graceful profusion over the breast and arms, was scarcely dark enough to form a sufficient contrast—was most exquisite, and the attitude, one of perfect ease and grace. Our guides—the bishop himself, being absent at his country-seat—not being connoisseurs, could not tell us by what pencil this gem of the arts had been produced. Indeed, this was the case with regard to most of the splendid paintings in the rooms, and having no catalogue to assist us, we were obliged to depend upon our own recollections of the subjects of the pieces, and the uncertain lights of style, of coloring, and composition of the various masters, for a knowledge of their respective works. There were two Fornarinas in the collection, one said to be an original by Rafael, and the other a copy. They were both very fine, and the original so perfect a conception of a beautiful Italian face, that one felt half disposed to fall in love with it, himself. The adoration of the infant

Saviour by the wise men of the east, by Rubens, was perfect in the grouping of its figures ; the expression of awe and humility depicted in the faces of the worshipers ; and the rich coloring for which this great master is so celebrated. Having but little of the enthusiasm of the artist, although I am fond of good pictures, and none of the jargon of the professional critic, I will not weary the reader with a detailed description, or even an enumeration of the several pieces, good, bad and indifferent, which we alternately inspected. I will mention but one other which chained the attention of us all, and to which we, *non. con.* awarded the tribute of our admiration. It was evidently the production of some great master of the French school ; but of whom, we could not learn. The subject was the sick child ; and in point of conception, coloring and execution, it was most perfect. It represented the little sufferer sitting on the lap of its mother, in the most natural attitude imaginable, with its head drooping, with half-closed eyes, upon its breast, in all the langour and lassitude of disease—its wasted arms hanging listlessly by its side, and the pallor of death in its beautiful features. But the expression of deep anguish and anxiety depicted in the mother's face, and the tearfulness of her eye, as she looked up to a picture of the Virgin in prayer, while the physician was feeling the pulse of the little sufferer, and seemingly meditating on the remedies to be applied, struck us as the triumph of art, indeed.

From the picture-gallery we passed into the library, composed of about fifty thousand volumes, as we were informed, and distributed in three several suites of rooms. The books were neatly packed in cedar cases (which spread an agreeable odor through the apartments), and were, as one might suppose, chiefly of a religious character ; though history, law, medicine, the exact sciences, and the *belles lettres* claimed their share. All the old fathers of the church were there, in the dead languages, in which they respectively wrote, looking learned and forbidding in their parchment bindings, and brazen clasps ; all the polemics of the Italian school, and indeed everything which could throw a ray of light upon the origin and progress of the Christian religion. The literature of these rooms was not all "black letter," however. There were volumes here, to which the tired ecclesiastic might resort,

after a night's vigil over the ponderous tomes of the fathers, for cheerful amusement. I noticed, among the rest, a superb edition of Don Quixote, with plates, such as to look upon was to laugh. They showed us, here, among other curious and rare volumes, a fine old edition of the bible, published in polyglot, in London, by Thomas Roycroft, A. D., 1657. The text is arranged in parallel columns of Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Greek, and is compared with early translations in Samaritan, Greek, Chaldaic, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian, and the Latin vulgate. Elaborate and voluminous dictionaries and grammars of the Aztec tongue, and other cognate Indian languages—works of the untiring and zealous old ecclesiastics who followed close upon the heels of the conquest—were also shown us. While the learned old priests were unlooming all these various stores of erudition for our inspection, we, of course, looked wise, and like wise men, held our peace—limiting ourselves to venturing, now and then, upon a half-forgotten classical allusion, as we chanced to recall some of the shreds and patches of our college learning. In this manner we passed, no doubt, quite creditably—considering that we were barbarians swarming fresh from our northern hive of land-robbers—through the musty ordeal of the *salas* of the library; and I fancied, after breathing such an atmosphere, that I felt quite learned myself, until I emerged from the twilight into the open streets, and the glare of the sun, and the bustle of the busy multitude dispelled the illusion. Our visit to the bishop's palace will long remain upon my mind as a pleasant reminiscence. My only regret is that I did not see the venerable old prelate himself, as he was spoken of as one of the *sabios*, or wise men of Mexico. He was represented, however, by a very clever and agreeable priest, one of the professors in the adjoining college. We did not visit this latter building, but were informed it contained five hundred scholars—day scholars included. What a babel of confusion must be here, in the hours of study! The most noisy of all schools in the world is a Mexican school, where it seems to be a part of the routine for each scholar to sing, in a sort of nasal monotone, his lesson, pretty much after the fashion he is taught to love his Maker, viz: "with all his might, with all his soul, and with all his strength."

The feast of Corpus Christi occurring soon after our arrival in Puebla, we had an opportunity of witnessing the performance of a splendid high-mass at the cathedral, with the additional ceremonies customary on such occasions. The procession of the Host through the streets—one of those theatrical performances, which are carried to such injudicious lengths in all Spanish countries, as to bring discredit upon religion, rather than add to its solemnity—was dispensed with, in consequence of our hostile presence; the ecclesiastics fearing that some want of reverence or respect, on our part, might mar the ceremonies of the day. In which, I am sure, they were in error, as there was the utmost disposition, on the part of both officers and men, to conform to the usages of the country, in all religious matters. Indeed, on all occasions, they studiously avoided giving umbrage to the people, on this score, not only from motives of policy inculcated by the superior officers, but from individual good feeling, and a natural respect for religion. It was quite common to see our officers—Protestant as well as Catholic—kneeling before the altar, in the solemn parts of the mass; which not only produced a good effect upon the people, but was strictly proper in itself; as surely no one has a right to intrude himself into a house of worship, and outrage the devotional feelings of the congregation—whose private house it is—by non-conformity with their usages. Corpus Christi, beside being a high religious festival, was a holiday in town and country. All business was suspended in the city, and the shops, except those for refreshment, closed; but the people having flocked in from the country in their *gala* dresses, and the towns-people too, giving themselves up to the feast, all was movement and festivity—religious and social copjoined. The bells of the city—of which there cannot be less than five hundred!—rang forth their mingled peals of sadness and joy; and all the churches were thronged during a succession of masses, from early dawn to a late hour in the day. A fair compromise having been thus made with religion, in the morning, the good people, with a safe conscience, delivered themselves to the arch-enemy, in the afternoon. The refreshment-women of the *portales* had their stalls dressed with a profusion of beautiful flowers, natural and artificial; and boys and girls, in shrill and musical voices, cried their sweetmeats and lemonades through the



streets ; each one having his or her waiter decorated with tiny flags, among which was to be seen that of the conquering stripes and stars ; which cunning device of the shrewd little itinerants extracted many a *medio*—sixpence—from the patriotic pockets of the soldiers. The grand *plaza* was literally crammed with its promiscuous crowd of men and women, some selling and others buying, but all in pursuit of pleasure ; the parti-colored petticoats of the women, and the gay *serapes* and fancifully decorated hats of the men, giving a most unique and picturesque effect to the busy multitude. All the *paseos*—public walks—where the commanders of our regiments had considerably stationed bands of music—were thronged with cavaliers and pedestrians, and the *plaza de toros*—square of bulls—was thrown open, for the first time since our arrival, and a bull-fight—that Celtic remnant of barbarism—closed the festivities of the day. In the evening, the careless and pleasure-seeking multitude assembled at the *Tivoli* gardens—hereafter to be described—where recreation and dancing were continued to a late hour in the night.

The general-in-chief, attended by a numerous staff, glittering in their gold-seamed pantaloons and embroidered coats, was present at the high mass at the cathedral, where a full choir, consisting of something like a hundred voices, and a variety of musical instruments electrified us by the most splendid of church music. The building was crowded to excess, by high and low, rich and poor, and the solemn and magnificent service produced a marked effect upon the discordant multitude there assembled. The general knelt by the side of the blanketed *lepero* ; and in the presence of their common father, all distinctions seemed for the moment forgotten—as well the distinction of race and religion, as that of victor and vanquished. Indeed, so exemplary was our deportment in the churches, that the newspapers in the capital were already beginning to abuse us for it ! They feared lest our adroit hypocrisy, as they characterized this deportment, should draw over to us a portion of the unwary multitude. “Beware, Mexicans !” they said, “These Yankees, when in Jalapa, where there were plenty of pretty women, and where gallantry was the order of the day, were obsequious and attentive *beaux*, but now that

they have arrived in *Puebla of the Angels*, where religion is in vogue, they have suddenly become *saints*!"

After the mass was concluded, the host was carried in procession around the interior of the building,—those of the spectators who chose, following with lighted candles in their hands, politely supplied by the churchmen in attendance. The gallant colonel of dragoons, whose name and fame had preceded him from the heights of *Cerro Gordo*, and who is a Catholic, the accomplished surgeon-general, who, on the battle-field, seemed to have decidedly more taste for the sabre than the scalpel, skillful as he was in the use of this, and a number of other officers, high in rank, followed in the procession. A solemn chant of the choir continued during the imposing ceremony, and what with the burning incense of a dozen censers ascending high above the heads of the multitude, curling around pillar and capital, and rolling in mimic clouds along the vaulted dome—the glare of a thousand waxen candles—the gray hairs of the venerable old priests, and the sea of heads of human beings, the scene was one not often witnessed, and being witnessed, to be remembered.

There are something like a hundred churches, large and small, in and about *Puebla*. Not only does a tall spire appear to rise in almost every square in the city, but each little eminence in the surrounding plain is crowned with its picturesque Gothic temple—frequently embowered in the most lovely of forest trees. One of the peculiarities which strikes an American with much force, in walking the streets of *Puebla*, is the great number of ecclesiastics in proportion to the population; all dressed in the costumes of centuries gone by, and with their broad-brim hats rolled up at the sides, and their flowing cassocks—white, brown, or black, according to their respective orders—presenting a most *outré*, and even ludicrous appearance. Indeed, the Mexican clergy, like the Spanish, seem determined, by adhering to their street processions and their antiquated garments, to render religion as little attractive as possible; and to preserve that *imperium in imperio*, in worldly things, which has long since passed from them. With better taste and more judgment, they should follow the example of their worthy brethren of the same denomination in the United

States, and adapt their dress to modern ideas—for their dress is no part of their religion—and perform the rites of worship within their churches, where they would not come in contact with the vulgar traffic of the streets, nor be degraded by ostentatious display. There are beside the secular clergy, great numbers of monks, and nuns. Of the latter, there are eleven institutions in the city alone—some of them of such rigid orders, that their inmates are not permitted to be seen by their nearest relatives, when they have once shut themselves up in these living tombs. The Capuchins are of this order; and in one of the families we visited, the young ladies told us they had a sister belonging to this order, who had been two years a nun, and whom, although they had conversed with her behind a screen, they had not seen in all this time; nor did they ever expect to see her again! It must require a heroic resolution, indeed, on the part of a young woman, thus to shut herself out forever from all intercourse with her family. There is, of course, no compulsion practiced in these matters, under the republican institutions of Mexico; the laws, at all times, unlocking the convent gates to such as wish to return to the world. But the monasteries of Mexico, as well male as female, are fast becoming depopulated, and probably, ere long, as they are deprived, from time to time, of their property by the state, their inmates will be reduced in numbers to the standard required by the present wants of society—that is to say, to the numbers demanded by the several literary institutions, as instructors of youth. To this extent, there could be no possible objection to them, as the recluses would no longer be drones, or consumers, without being producers, but would be actively and beneficially employed in the affairs of life. And if, while thus employed, and under proper protection from the laws, they choose, for the sake of religion, to withdraw themselves from the vanities and temptations of the world, who can object? State policy no longer having anything to do with it, it would be as intolerant as unwise and unjust, to throw obstacles in their way.

The most agreeable resorts in *Puebla* are the *paseos*. In the western extremity of the city, there is one of these public walks which covers twenty acres of ground! It has five splendid fountains—there being stone benches constructed around each, for the

convenience of visitors—and is filled with fine forest and shade trees, beneath which one may wander until he is tired, with a continually changing prospect. A profusion of shrubs and flowers adorn the avenues and side-walks, and many plots of well kept green-sward, afford play-grounds for the children and their nurses. It was our practice, during our "occupation," to station bands of music here—and at the Tivoli also, at the other end of the city—twice a week, when the *beau monde* all turned out to ride and promenade in this delightful *paseo*.

The *Tivoli*, on the other hand, though not less thronged, was not so fashionable. Hither, that class of girls known in France by the term *grisette*, resorted with their *beaux* to drink sherbets and eat ices, and dance in a *sala de bayle*, and sometimes in the open air, on the green-sward. Every person was admitted, without question, upon paying a *real*, and although the gardens were frequently crowded, the utmost propriety prevailed. I never saw an intoxicated man at these festivals of the common people, nor witnessed improper behavior on the part of the women! The Mexican woman, unlike the English or American woman, however degraded she may be, by vice, never betrays her degradation in public. Another remarkable difference of manner exists. The better classes of Mexican women, or those occupying the position of ladies, frequently resort to places of this kind, to look on, from their carriage windows, and enjoy the sports of the humbler classes.

The population of Puebla differs but little from that of the rest of Mexico, being mostly Indian. The proportion of white persons struck me as being less here than at Jalapa; it being about one to thirty. Many of the better classes had emigrated previous to our entering the city, and but few of the fugitives returned during our stay. The population being an inland one, which had had but little intercourse with foreigners, naturally became alarmed at the exaggerated reports of murder, rape, and robbery which had preceded us—reports of this character having been purposely propagated, by the Mexican press, to render us as odious as possible to the people. Those families which did remain, kept themselves closely shut up for the first few days, apparently expecting us to sack their houses and violate their women. By degrees,

however, as neither of these things occurred, first one member of the family and then another, would come to the window, to take a peep at some passing barbarian. Daily growing bolder, they, at length, unbarred and unfastened their doors and windows, and came forth into the streets—the women even gaining courage to decorate themselves in their evening costumes, and to look, with eyes of evident admiration, upon the comely and manly forms of our younger officers, whom they could not but contrast, favorably, with their more puny husbands and *beaux*. A communicative old lady, whom I met one evening, with her pretty daughter, at a *soirée dansante*, given by a French resident, described to me, graphically, the consternation and alarm of the fair *poblanas*, when they heard of the approach of General Worth. "The whole world was packing up, and scampering off in great haste," said she, "to get out of the way of the terrible *Americanos del Norte*, and I and my daughter would have gone with the rest, but we had no carriage of our own, and could not hire one for love or money, in such demand were they, and so we were compelled to remain. For the first few days, we were terribly alarmed, but we soon got over it; and now, you see, we are not afraid of you at all." The daughter, who, during this conversation, was sitting at a harp, on which she was preparing to play, and in whose ear a young dragoon or two was whispering broken Spanish, seemed, as the mother said, to be "not at all afraid" of these dashing young fellows, but already began to flirt her fan at them, in a manner which none but a Spanish woman can do.

One of the most agreeable families we visited here, was of Irish origin. The mercurial Irish seem to have mixed more with the sober Dons than almost any other nation; not even excepting the French; between whom and the Spaniards there is more similarity of language and manners. The O'Reillys and O'Donnells of the Emerald Isle have made places for themselves among the old nobility of Spain, and what is more to the purpose, have filled, during several generations, important spaces in the public eye, and written their names and nation indelibly in the Spanish annals. The master of the family, of which I am speaking, was Mexican-born, but the son of an Irishman. Neither he nor any member of his family spoke anything but Spanish; but they all

retained great affection for their fatherland, and were fond of claiming their relationship with the great race from which they were descended. The cross seemed to have worked remarkably well, in a Malthusian sense, at least, as the lady-mother of this interesting family, who still retained much freshness and vigor of constitution, had borne her lord *twenty* heirs to his honors and estates, and was on the eve of presenting him with the twenty-first, when we made her acquaintance! A patriotic example worthy of all praise and imitation by my country-women. Although of Mexican descent herself, she had thoroughly imbibed her husband's ideas and predilections with regard to race; and did not hesitate, in conversation, to criticise her countrymen, especially the military, with no little pungency. Indeed, I found this frequently the case, in Mexico. Wherever our countrymen, or the English had married native ladies, they had uniformly made them "one flesh and one blood" with themselves, in all that pertained to their respective countries. I lodged at the house of an American gentleman, in the city of Mexico, for several weeks after our entry into the capital, and found his wife, who was an intelligent Mexican lady, and who, by-the-by, had done her lord equal honor, with her Irish compeer, by bearing him a numerous family of children, more enthusiastic, if possible, than her husband, in her admiration of our country and its institutions. As in duty bound, and in compliment to her lord, she, of course, thought one good specimen of a northern man equal to at least a dozen *foxos Mexicanos*—weakly Mexicans!

Our Pueblan friend had five grown daughters; and as they were sprightly girls with fine complexions, and melting black eyes, who, beside chatting prettily, played on harp and piano, they soon became great favorites with us; and their house was generally well filled, of an evening, with the young officers of the different regiments, speaking, or trying to speak, according to the progress they had severally made, the Castilian. The lady-mother took the less advanced pupils under her especial charge, and amusingly and wittily gave them oral instruction, in the pronunciation and syntax of her language, in exchange for a few words of English, whenever she could withdraw them, for a moment or so, from the sides of her lovely daughters; whom the young men, by the way,

seemed to think better preceptresses than their mother. Perhaps when the words became somewhat difficult, the eyes, in the latter case, came to the rescue, and assisted in the explanation of them, as the eyes of young people of different sexes will sometimes do. In short, we found this a most worthy and kind-hearted family, and we were indebted to it for many pleasant evenings, while we remained in *Puebla*, and for many pleasant reminiscences afterward. We often recalled it kindly to each other when we were bivouacked on the open plain, after a dreary march, and drank to its health and prosperity from our canteens, while we chatted carelessly around our camp-fires; wishing the lady-mother to bear, at least, a dozen more such daughters, and the daughters to get good husbands. They found it politic to leave *Puebla* before we did, in consequence of some illiberal remarks that had been made concerning them, by their countrymen, who called them *Americans*, in derision, and behaved otherwise ungallantly toward them. I called on them, a day or two before they retired to their *hacienda*—some seven or eight leagues distant—when one of the young ladies, with the utmost despondency depicted in her pretty face, told me, as she raised her moistened black eyes toward the ceiling, “we are going where there is nothing but *cielo y tierra!*”—the heavens and the earth—“but papa says it is better, and so we must needs comply.” This family was a specimen of the upper classes, among which they moved, in all that relates to national manners, education, and refinement. No women are more kind hearted, or more full of the amiable sensibilities of the sex, than the Mexican. Perfectly feminine in character, they are indeed the vine to cling around the oak, which nature designed the sex to be. They would be shocked at the idea of holding public meetings, or discussing, in open forum, the equal rights of women, as unsexed females sometimes do in other countries. Their principal defect consists in a want of education; which, however, is compensated for, by so many amiable traits of character, that one scarcely perceives it. They are as artless in their manners as children, easy and graceful in their movements, and sprightly and witty in conversation.

The great majority of the women of *Puebla* go barefoot! Even women well-dressed, in other respects, that is to say, with good-

looking skirts or petticoats, and fancy *reboso*, may be seen tripping along, with their bare feet on the cold flag-stones, to mass. Stockings, even among the middling classes, seem to have been entirely eschewed; a female of these classes being considered well and decently dressed, with slippers and bare ankles. I do not exaggerate, when I say, that I did not see more than one woman in forty indulge in the luxury of shoes; and the greater luxury of stockings was so rare, that we always called each others attention to the appearance of a pair of white silks or cottons glittering upon the ankles of any aristocratic wearer, who might trip daintily by, with her petticoats coquettishly shortened, the better to display them. No woman of the middling or lower classes of Mexico is ever dressed above the waist. All the dressing is below—the chemise and *reboso*—a sort of long, thin shawl, in which the head and shoulders are enveloped—being sufficient to set off the upper woman. Indeed, I have more than once paid a visit to ladies of the *haut ton*, who have come in to receive me, apparently just risen from the *siesta*, with their dresses entirely loose, and open behind; so much so, as to make a man feel somewhat nervous in their presence. (With the utmost *nonchalance*, they would put one hand behind them, and gather them together when they thought them a *little too open*), or endeavor to cover so much of their undergarments as were visible, with the folds of their shawls. But “*honi soit qui mal y pense*”—they thought nothing of it, themselves.

It is quite a common practice for Mexican ladies to ride a-straddle on horseback. Although this struck me as very odd, at first, I soon became accustomed to the sight. Education gives us many queer notions, and among others, the notion that it is proper to jeopard the lives of our women whenever we put them on horseback, merely for the sake of making them ride differently from the men. I witnessed this mode of horsemanship for the first time, on the fashionable *paseo*, the young lady being surrounded by three or four of her beaux, and chatting and laughing with them as unconcernedly as if both of her nether limbs had been on the same side of her saddle! Indeed, her appearance was in all respects perfectly modest. She was dressed in a long riding-habit that, parting at the hips, fell



down gracefully on either side of the saddle and entirely concealed her lower person from view ; so that the only indecency existed entirely in the imagination of the beholder, and not in anything he saw. Smoking is one of the accomplishments of the Mexican women, high and low ; but this is not a Mexican peculiarity, since it is found among many of the European nations. The young ladies smoke a delicate little paper cigar, which they hold with a grace between their thumb and fore-finger, while the older ones sometimes indulge in a real *puro, al caballero*. It looks a little odd to an American, at first, to see an elegant young lady puffing away hurriedly to finish her cigar, before she complies with his request to favor him with a tune on the harp or guitar ; or turning her head to one side, in the waltz, to avoid puffing the smoke in his face ; and then the poetry that hangs round the sex is in a great measure destroyed, by her asking him for the spit-box ! As for the old women, it is not of so much consequence, since there is no poetry about *them*, and least of all about a Mexican old woman, whose skin is about the color of parchment, and to all appearance, as tough. Among the upper classes of Mexican females, I am inclined to think there is less virtue than with us. Among the lower classes, with rare exceptions, there is none. Women of all classes are very prolific, and begin to bear children at a very early age. I have frequently been pained to see a girl of thirteen or fourteen, lugging her own child through the streets, and exhibiting all the signs of prematurely developed womanhood. These poor creatures, being thus early reduced to a life of toil and hardship, are in an infinitely worse condition than the female slaves on our southern plantations, who have masters to feed and take care of their infants.

The gentlemen rival, if they do not excel the French, in politeness. Indeed, I have sometimes been tempted to smile at its ludicrous excess. In departing from a Mexican house, you never know when you have made your last bow ; and one must be exceedingly watchful to avoid giving offense by too abrupt an exit. You are expected to bow and say something civil at departing—you turn round, and bow again at the drawing-room door. The master of the house follows you into the *sala*, or hall. You bow to him upon descending the stairs—and turn round as you reach

each landing, and bow again. When you have reached the foot of the stairs, you make your final bow, and are at liberty to pass into the street. All this time, the master of the house stands bowing and scraping to you from the topmost step.

Education, among the males of the upper classes, is quite common, but it is not sufficiently practical to be adapted to the wants and requirements of the age in which they live. Their educational institutions being entirely under the control of religious men, who are mere classical scholars, living amid the wrecks of a by-gone literature, as a matter of course, too much stress is laid on this literature, to the neglect of the sciences. The Mexican youth studies polemics, more than he does his geography and algebra; and the consequence is, that while he is shrewd and quick at disputation, especially at that kind of disputation which is "*vox et preterea nihil*," he is deficient in preparation for the business of life.

There can be no question that the great majority of public men in Mexico, are eminently corrupt—and their corruption proceeds very naturally from the unfortunate training they undergo in that most corrupting of all schools—the school of politics and demagoguism. Those who have inherited or amassed sufficient fortune to place themselves above the temptations of office, for the sake of the emoluments and plunder it affords, have retained their honesty: a state of things fraught with many useful reflections for us Americans. Poverty is undoubtedly a crime in a public man, on the principle, "command my bread, command me;" and no poor devil, who has not brains enough to earn his living out of office, should ever be permitted to disturb the public peace by entering one.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**DESCRIPTION** of Puebla continued—The lower classes—The *leperos*, and the *ladrones*, or robbers—Mexican justice—Mexican houses all closed at eight o'clock at night—The spy company organized by General Scott, and its notorious captain—Dominguez—General Worth's able and politic government of the city, and the good results arising therefrom—St. John's day—The army grows tired of inactivity—The drill-grounds, and the splendid divisions of Worth and Twiggs—Sketches of the personal appearance, etc., of the principal officers—Captain Kearney sent forward under a flag of truce; author accompanies him—Excursion to the Rio Frio, and return.

PUEBLA has a bad reputation for its lower orders. There are said to be as many desperate villains congregated here, as in any other city of the union, save perhaps the capital; and the scowling, unwashed, uncombed appearance of the "blanketed" gentry certainly seems to justify the remark. General Worth, upon taking possession, found several hundred prisoners in the city prisons, although many others had been liberated by their countrymen. Some of these wretches, who had neither money, nor personal, nor political influence, wherewith to bribe their judges, had been lying in confinement three and four years; while many of the most desperate highwaymen, captured from time to time, had been permitted to escape, after a nominal imprisonment. Bribery and corruption among the judges are so common, as to be a subject of daily comment among the Mexicans themselves; and one frequently hears the better order of citizens lament that it is impossible to procure the conviction of a criminal, however notorious his crimes, provided he have money. The consequence is that which we daily witness, the infestation of the highways by robbers. Indeed, not long since, a lieutenant-colonel in the Mexican army was executed for participation in a barbarous murder and robbery; and facts were developed on his trial, showing him to have been long connected with an organized band of *ladrones*. Members of congress, journeying toward the capital from the more distant

parts of the republic, have frequently to avail themselves of military escorts, to enable them to reach their destination. In Puebla, I had often pointed out to me, notorious highwaymen, who passed boldly through the streets, unwhipped of justice ; and every morning or two, reports would come in to us, of robberies committed beyond the range of our sentinels. The villains, with more or less of the sentiment of religion about them—one frequently sees them at their prayers—are guilty even of robbing the churches !

Beside these more daring and dangerous exploits, the “blanketed” of Puebla possess great sleight-of-hand at petty larceny ; and one of the first cautions given you by your hotel keeper, is not to leave anything exposed. I was amused at an instance of this adroitness, which occurred soon after our arrival, in front of the “*Reboso*.” As a servant was unloading our baggage-wagon, he carelessly dropped on the pavement a pistol case, belonging to one of my messmates. The case flew open, and the pistols, balls, etc., were scattered around. While the servant was gathering up the balls, etc., leaving, in his wisdom, the larger articles to be attended to, more at leisure, one of the “blanketed”—two or three others being in company—picked up a pistol, with the sleight-of-hand of an Indian juggler, and walked off with it before the eye of both master and man ! To this accomplishment, these *chevaliers d'industrie* add that of an adroit and skillful use of the *cuchillo*—knife. Civilization has taught them this—the other propensity is a part of their Indian nature. The blanket affords them great facility for the concealment and use of this weapon. Even the boys carry their knives, and begin to use them at a very early age. I saw two youngsters, on one occasion—the eldest not being more than seven years—quarreling in the street over a game of *monte*—one of their little blankets being spread on the pavement for the convenience of dealing their cards—when the smaller boy, in the twinkling of an eye, whipped out his knife, and made a pass at the other, which must have killed him, had it not been dextrously avoided. His excitement being over in a moment, he very deliberately put up his knife, and the two went to playing *monte* again ! So it is with the men ; they do not have a “bit of a row,” a knock-down, and a black eye, and then make up, and

take a drink together in the neighboring coffee-house, as would be the case with us, in New York or Boston, among a similar class of men; but they either resort to their knives, in hot blood, or what is more common, watch their opportunity with true Indian patience, and when they can do so without personal risk, stiletto their enemy with as little compunction as—they would rob a church!

I was struck, upon my arrival, with the quiet which reigned everywhere in the streets soon after night-fall, and attributed it, at first, to our "occupation;" upon inquiry, however, I found that it was customary at all times, and in all other cities of the republic. As early as eight, or at most, nine o'clock, the streets are entirely deserted, and the doors and windows of all the houses closed and jealously barred; as if a general fear and distrust prevailed. If you make a visit after this hour of the night, before you are admitted, it is demanded of you to say who you are, and you are closely scrutinized by the aid of a lamp, through the *reja*—a small, square grating fixed in every street door.

The blanketed gentry of whom I have been speaking, were disposed, for the first few days after our entry, to be somewhat surly, and to dispute the side-walks with us; but a rap or two over the head, with the flat of the sabre, or a well-directed blow from a doubled fist, soon brought them to their senses, and they were always in a hurry, afterward, to get out of our way. We kept a wary eye on them, however, and never went out at night without our sabres; and if alone, we avoided doubling too closely the street corners. General Scott organized, while we remained here, a spy company of these vagabonds, headed by a notorious robber named Dominguez, which brought more discredit on our arms by its pilfering and bad behavior, than was compensated for by any service it performed.

We occupied Puebla three months, previous to our march upon Mexico; and the city during this time, was probably better policed than it had ever been before. General Worth, in the two weeks he had occupied it previous to our arrival, had quieted the fears of the population, and so harmonized his rule with that of the municipality, which he had retained in power, as to give general satisfaction. He encountered some opposition at first; but by the

exercise of proper firmness, tempered with kindness and courtesy, he soon conciliated all minds, and overcame all difficulties. The municipal officers, whom he had been obliged, during the first few days of his government, to imprison in a body for contumacy, afterward resumed the exercise of their functions, and continued in it, during the remainder of our stay. General Scott was equally successful in continuing this state of things, after his arrival. It is true, the prefect ran off, after having written him an insolent letter, but another was appointed in his stead, without disturbing the harmony of the city government, and no further difficulties occurred. This mixed system of policy, of making the Mexicans govern themselves, *sub modo*, was admirably adapted to accomplish our purposes, which were to conciliate the people, at the same time that we retained sufficient control over affairs, to ensure the safety of the army, and further the objects of the campaign. It relieved the commanding general, too, of a vast amount of labor. Our troops, beside occupying commanding points without the city, were judiciously distributed in different parts of it, the better to watch over and to protect it, as well from external assaults, as from riot, or disorder within. In addition to this, the native watchmen were permitted to retain their arms, and officiate in their several wards as usual; and at night, their shrill, "*Ave Maria! son las doce de la noche, y sereno,*" was not unmusically mixed with the more sonorous "all's well!" of the American sentinel. Few cities occupied by a belligerent army for the space of three months, can present a list of so few casualties, as occurred at Puebla. We lost but two men killed during the whole time, although we had eight thousand troops distributed among a native population of sixty thousand! One of these was a teamster, and the other a New York volunteer. The usual occupations of trade and industry went forward; abundant supplies came in to us from all quarters; and the city was, I have no doubt, really more prosperous under our rule, than it had been for many years before. The entire foreign population, and many of the natives testified to this fact, and the permanent dominion of the United States might, no doubt, have been established over the ancient city of the "Angels," without the slightest opposition—so glaring was the contrast between a revolutionary government, which rendered life

insecure, and unsettled the land-marks of property, and the rule of the Anglo-Saxon, whose military officers even, are taught to carry with them, wherever they go, the ideas and guarantees of liberty and security.

June 23d. This is St. John's day. All the town is agog, as is usual on feast days. The church bells are chiming forth their merry peals, and the streets are thronged with the population of city and country, in their gala dresses, all going to, or returning from, mass. St. John's church, gaily decorated with flowers, is the principal point of attraction; and thither wend wife and maid to offer up their prayers to the patron saint, for husbands and sweethearts. An unusual display of clean white stockings, and new slippers, has taken place, and we fancy that the population—the female population, I mean; we never look at the males—looks sweeter and fresher to-day, than usual, as this is the great festival on which all Mexico washes itself! Everybody turns out at four o'clock in the morning, for this purpose, and there is a constant stream of humanity passing into and out of the public bathing establishments, from this hour until twelve or one o'clock, when it is supposed everybody in the city is washed. The bath-tubs are engarlanded with roses, and the couches bestrewn with fruits and flowers; and the younger revelers, who bathe in groups, and who make the morning merry with their laughter, pay quite as much honor to Flora and Pomona, as to St. John. Our lady acquaintances told us to look out for heavy rains to-day, as St. John never fails to usher in his own festival with the most copious showers. But St. John rained less than usual, and we had a bright afternoon in which to enjoy our usual *promenade à cheval*, on the *Paseo*, and to witness the general turn-out of the population. There is great virtue in soap and water, and it is a pity we have not two or three annual feasts of St. John in our own larger cities, for the benefit of our unwashed sovereigns, and their respective little princes and princesses.

We are growing somewhat tired of our inactivity. Puebla begins to lose the charm of novelty, and we are anxious to be moving toward the "Halls of the Montezumas;" that terminus of the campaign, which each one has pictured to his imagination in such glowing colors, and which is to repay us for so much tedious

delay, and for so much toil and hardship ; the said toil and hardship, so far as the officers are concerned, who are mostly mounted, and have baggage-wagons *ad lib.*, to carry their wardrobes and comfortable bedding, consisting in performing a very interesting tour, in a very unique and interesting country ! We had hoped to hold our "revel" in the Halls, on the coming fourth of July ; but that hope we have now abandoned, as it will be impossible for our reinforcements to be up in time.

But as we cannot be marching, we are doing the next best thing, drilling, and preparing our troops for the march. The city of Mexico, which once invited us with open gates to enter it, is now being converted into a citadel, by the indefatigable Santa Anna, and we shall have to fight one or more battles to capture it. We have two beautiful drill grounds in the vicinity of Puebla, and they are as classic as they are beautiful—one of them being situated on the road to *Tlascala*, and the other in full view of *Cholula*.—The snow mountains look down upon them both, and they are covered with the most velvety green-sward. There is a regiment constantly on drill in one or the other of these plains ; and once or twice a week, there is a division review, at which the general-in-chief is sometimes present. When General Worth or Twiggs drills his division, half the town flocks out to witness the splendid spectacle. The veterans of these divisions (the 1st and 2d of regulars) which have hitherto borne the brunt of the war, and are expected to bear it again, perform their various evolutions, with the ease and accuracy, of so much machinery, under the guidance of their skillful officers ; and nothing can exceed the gorgeous *coup d'œil* presented by a review of one of these famous corps. The magnificent plain, with its storied associations ; the transparency of the brilliant atmosphere, unknown to, and almost inconceivable by, a dweller in low-lands ; the solid phalanx as it is moved hither and thither at will ; the glitter of bayonets, the flutter of pennons, and the soul-stirring music of the bands, all form a picture which the imagination may conceive, but which the pen, or at least, my pen, refuses to commit to paper.

I always connected these military displays—fancifully, no doubt—with the history of Cortez and his exploits. But our situation was somewhat similar. With a handful of men, we had, like him,



boldly thrown ourselves into the interior of the country. We had not burned our ships, but we had suffered our retreat to be cut off, in case of disaster; and we were now preparing to march against the same city of Mexico, which he had conquered, and from nearly the same place; as he had marched on his great expedition, first from Tlascala, and then from Cholula. Science and skill, and the nature of weapons considered, our great predecessor, as compared with his enemy, had had greatly the advantage of us; for his invading force, Tlascalans and other Indian allies included, amounted, at times, to from twenty to forty thousand men; his allies being at least equal, if not superior, as soldiers, to the enemy. We expected to move with ten thousand, all told! If beaten, he could fall back upon Tlascala, which sturdy little republic had become his faithful friend and confederate in the war; but if we should be beaten, our total destruction would be inevitable.

While the troops were being thus drilled, General Scott was diligently organizing and arranging affairs for a forward movement. The commissaries and quarter-masters—among whom were my talented and energetic messmates, Irwin and Wayne—were gathering together all the necessary supplies of animals and provisions, and the accomplished corps of engineers—topographical and regular—with the indefatigable Major Turnbull and Captain Lee at their head—Major Smith, the superior of the latter being an invalid—were collecting from every reliable source, military and topographical information for the government of the campaign. Through the great abilities of our friend Hargous, aided by his extensive commercial connection, in the capital, and elsewhere, the financial operations of the army were conducted without loss to the country, or inconvenience to officers or soldiers. The drafts of the government were always cashed at par, and sometimes even at a premium, and the military chest was always abundantly supplied. Thus we had money and provisions in abundance, and wanted only men; and we had intelligence that these were being rapidly raised and equipped, and sent forward with all dispatch. Mr. Marey certainly showed himself an able and active secretary of war, and considering the difficulties he had to encounter, arising from the want of a precedent organi-

sation in many of the staff corps under his control, and the necessity of raising and equipping raw levies in different and distant parts of the country, and transporting them by sea to the base of operations, must be regarded as having been eminently successful in performing his part of the duties of the campaign. The people are but too prone to award all the glory of achievements in war, to those who fight the battles, and appear more prominently upon the theater of events, without reflecting that these are but the creatures of the government which puts them in motion, and without the active support and co-operation of which they would be powerless. Carnot, the celebrated French minister of war, under the consulate and empire, fought and won many of the battles in his cabinet, for which his generals got the credit.—General Scott was thus, instead of being “fired upon from his rear,” ably seconded by the secretary of war; and he, as ably, carried out his portion of the campaign, as we shall see.

While these proceedings were going forward, the general held nightly *levees* at the state palace, where he had established his head-quarters. These *réunions* were partly social and partly official—the various commanders of divisions and chiefs of staff corps repairing to them to “report progress,” and take further orders, and when their business was finished, joining with other visitors in “spending the evening.” Prominent among the topics of conversation was, of course, our contemplated movement upon Mexico; and many interesting discussions arose as to the enemy’s position and strength, and the best mode of march and attack. I was always an interested listener on these occasions, and am happy to bear my testimony to the universal respect, and sometimes affection with which the commander-in-chief was regarded. His superior military talents were acknowledged by all, and his large and comprehensive views of things in general, were frequently subjects for comment and admiration. Barring a little egotism, which perhaps was pardonable enough under the circumstances, and a disposition to assume and hold the *parole* a little too exclusively, which was made amends for by the interesting style of his conversation, General Scott could be as agreeable and fascinating a social companion, as he was a distinguished military leader. It was pleasant to see such men as Worth and Twiggs, Harney,

Riley, Smith and Quitman, listening to him with an attentive ear, and paying him not only the official respect due their chief, but the more endearing tribute of personal regard.

To a clear head, General Scott adds a remarkable memory; and I have frequently been amused to hear him quote line and page of his classics—which, upon being questioned, he would aver not to have looked into since he left school—to set right some younger member of his audience, fresh from Alma Mater. He is exceedingly rich in personal anecdote; and I, in common with others, have sat a whole evening, without saying a word, except now and then to ask for an explanation, listening enchanted to his reminiscences of men and things.

He is acquainted with most of the distinguished men of our country, and draws their portraits with a life-like accuracy—making due allowance for political prejudices—that gives you a better idea of them, than would a hundred ordinary biographies: in addition to this, he traveled over Europe in the most interesting period of its history—toward the commencement of the present century—and met, and retains vivid recollections of, many of the heroes and statesmen of that period, who have long since given their bodies to the worms and their names to fame. With some petulance and irascibility of temperament, he is possessed of an excellent heart, and always attaches to himself those by whom he is surrounded. He has no concealments, but speaks right out, and would as lief criticise the acts of the president of the United States, or the secretary of war, as those of any subaltern in his army. He is about six feet four inches in height, and proportioned accordingly; so that he is physically, as well as officially, the greatest man in his army! He is in the sixty-second year of his age (now, in 1847); is imposing in personal appearance, especially when dressed in full military costume; has rather a stern expression of countenance, and is deprived, partially, of the use of his right arm, by a wound received in early life, at the battle of Chippewa. There now! reader, I have given you a portrait of General Scott, such as he appeared to me at Puebla, and which I hope the general, should it meet his eye, will excuse. Should I be compelled to criticise portions of his conduct, hereafter, the reader must recollect that I am writing my impressions

of men and things as *I saw them*, and not, perhaps, as he or I could have wished them.

While we are sitting around the general's hospitable board (the discussions and conversations I have been sketching, took place around an oblong table, on which the general and his staff supped, and where there were always sundry bottles and drinking-cups, intermixed with dishes of salad, of which the general was extremely fond), let us look round upon two or three of the distinguished guests. There, on the general's right, sits General Worth, the most able of his generals, as he is the most *distingué* in appearance. His bronzed, weather-beaten features, and brilliant black eye, remind you of some of the portraits of Napoleon's marshals. You see your *beau idéal* of the warrior personified in him. In quickness of apprehension (indicated by his eagle glance), in coolness and the power of combination, and in ready resource in remedying disasters, or seizing upon favorable moments on the field of battle, he is acknowledged, on all hands, to have no superior. Even his personal enemies—and like other great men, he has some of these—are forced to award to him this merit. In his moments of relaxation, and especially at his own table, where, being a social man, he maintains a style approaching to luxury, he charms every one by the vivacity of his conversation, and the easy and courtly grace of his manners. He is not only a soldier, but a man of fine *belles lettres* acquirements, and of general reading. Like General Scott, he is somewhat irascible in mood, but never fails, when he has wounded the feelings of a friend or subordinate, by a hasty word, to make, like a true gentleman, the *amende honorable*.

“His eye-brow dark and eye of fire  
Showed spirit proud and prompt to ire;  
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek  
Did deep design and counsel speak.”

He has the peculiarity of identifying himself, so thoroughly, on the field of battle, with the operations which he is directing, as to lose all sense or appreciation whatever of personal danger.—His aids-de-camp have had frequently to insist upon his taking shelter, on occasions when exposure was entirely unnecessary. At the battle of Monterey, he was the leading spirit in the galaxy of heroes there assembled, and displayed all the qualities of a

great general. General Worth is about fifty-five years of age, and looks younger. In allusion to the elegant manner in which he sat his horse, the citizens of Mexico, after we entered the capital, gave him the *sommo de guerre*, of the "Murat of the American army." His friends, of whom he has a large number, while they admire the officer, love the man.

Next to General Worth, comes General Twiggs, who has been in all the principal battles, except that of *Buena Vista*, from Palo Alto to Cerro Gordo; in the latter of which, he not only planned the attack, as has been stated, before the arrival of General Scott on the ground, but with his division turned the enemy's position, and stormed the principal height; he is therefore entitled to be known as the hero of Cerro Gordo. The general is about sixty years of age, six feet in height, stout and well proportioned, and has a frank and open countenance that at once bespeaks his character as a blunt and fearless soldier.

General Quitman resembles General Worth somewhat, in personal appearance. He was bred a lawyer, and has held many distinguished civil posts in his adopted state—Mississippi. He bore an important part in the operations before Monterey, and is esteemed by all, as a chivalrous and gallant soldier. Although he was introduced into the army after the breaking out of the war, as a brigadier-general, without having gone through any of the subordinate grades, he has had the rare tact to conciliate the regular officers, over whose heads he was appointed, and to become even popular with them. He is a zealous amateur soldier, and seems to regard his new profession with an enthusiasm, akin to that with which the lover regards his mistress. He is about General Worth's age.

General Pillow, I have described in another place.

Colonel Persifer F. Smith, of the Rifles, is, like General Quitman, an amateur soldier; the rifle regiment, of which he is the colonel, having been organized within a year past. He is not new to the profession of arms, however, having seen much service in the Florida war, where he was associated with General Taylor.—It was at the instance of this latter officer, that he was appointed to the distinguished post he now holds. He bore an honorable part in the battle of Monterey. He is a well-read and accom-

plished gentleman, and a man of sound judgment. Like General Quitman, he has conciliated the officers of the "old army," and is already regarded by them as "one of us." In short, without carrying our sketches farther, we feel that with such a chief, and such subordinates, victory cannot but perch upon our standard.

July 4th. This morning our colors were displayed from the flag-staff of the government house, and a general interchange of courtesies took place among the officers of the various corps. It being Sunday, the salute which is usually fired on this anniversary, was deferred until the next day. In the evening a masquerade ball was given and largely attended by the younger officers. The generals held levees, and were called upon and congratulated by their friends.

July 11th. General Scott has at length made a movement in behalf of our unfortunate prisoners. He has written a dispatch to the Mexican president, proposing the exchange of majors Gaines and Borland, and Captain Cassius M. Clay, and their associates, who, as the reader knows, were captured in February last, at *Encarnacion*, near *Buena Vista*; he includes also, Passed-Midshipman Rogers, in his proposals. Captain Kearney, in command of two companies of dragoons, is to be sent forward with the dispatch, under a flag of truce, and I have obtained permission to accompany him, with my *staff*, to-wit, my man Seymour. Although I have now, for the first time, an opportunity offered me of taking forward my own dispatches, I have resolved not to present them, until I hear the result of General Scott's proposal, with regard to Mr. Rogers.

We were in the saddle, and at the appointed place of rendezvous, by seven o'clock the next morning, and substituting a white flag for one of the company *guidons*, in token of our errand of peace, we filed into the Mexican road, and commenced our march. We were in high spirits at the prospect of being permitted to enter the great city which was the object of all our thoughts, or at least, of obtaining a view of the glorious valley, in which it was so jealously inclosed and guarded, by the frowning ranges of the Cordilleras which we were about to traverse. The morning was bright and beautiful, as are all the mornings, in this climate of the

gods, even during the rainy season, which had now set in ; and the roads being tolerably good, we rode forward quite rapidly. About a mile from the *Garita*, we crossed a small stream (spanned by a neat and substantial stone bridge) whose turbid waters, swollen by the daily rains, were hurrying forward to the great Pacific. This was the first stream we had crossed since leaving Vera Cruz, that emptied into the western ocean, whither our empire was so rapidly tending ; and many were the reflections to which it gave rise. Our small navy on that side of the continent, under the lead of the gallant Commodore Stockton, aided by Colonel Frémont, had already added the Californias to our vast domain, and our flag would, no doubt, soon encircle the globe as that of the greatest commercial nation of the earth—that same flag which had been derided scarce forty years before—in the war of 1812—by our proud ancestor over the water, as a “ bit of striped bunting !” The fretful little river had other associations, too, of a widely different character. It was near the stone bridge, we were now crossing, that the renowned Cortez halted for the night, on his march from Tlascala to Cholula, in 1519 ; a century before the pioneers of the race which was now overrunning the country, had landed at Jamestown and Plymouth !

For some miles after leaving this small tributary, the country on either hand presented a barren and cheerless aspect—the lands wore the appearance of having been exhausted by excessive cultivation, and “ turned out as old fields,” to use an expressive phrase of our middle states. They had been furrowed into deep gulleys and ravines by the rains, and were dotted, here and there, by the *adobe* hut, and maguey inclosure of the herdsman. But if the near prospect was cheerless, we had only to raise our eyes to the magnificent ranges of mountains that encompassed us on every hand, to behold one of those sublime landscapes, which, as I have before remarked, break upon the astonished traveler at every step of his progress in this wonderful region. On our right, some ten or fifteen miles distant, stood the Malinche—that storm-gatherer of Puebla, at whose rugged peak the inhabitants are wont to look, at early morning, as upon a barometer, to ascertain the probable character of the weather for the day. However bright the sun may be shining in all the plain below, if there be

a coronet of fleecy clouds encircling the brow of the "Great Spirit," it will be sure to rain before mid-day. Beyond, we caught occasional glimpses of the dreaded Pinal, and other detached mountains, while the plain of Tlascala (immortalized by so many associations), sweeping by the base of the Malinche, stretched away as far as the eye could reach, to the north-west. On the left, and but three or four miles distant from us, rose the picturesque pyramid of Cholula, relieved boldly against the clear sky beyond. The truncated cone of an extinct volcano stood a solitary grandeur in the plain, between this beautiful feature of the landscape and the more distant mountains; and towering above, and looking down upon the valleys both of Puebla and Mexico, were the chill and icy summits of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, glittering beneath the rays of the newly risen sun. The uncultivated and almost uninhabited tract over which we were riding, is famous in the legends of travelers and diligence drivers, for the numerous robberies it has witnessed. Our guide, who was an American, and who had been many years a diligence driver in Mexico, pointed out to us several localities, as we rode along, where his own coach had been stopped and robbed; and related many amusing incidents of these feats of the Paul Cliffords of the plain.

Some seven or eight miles from Puebla, the country begins to lose its barren aspect. Cultivation, scant and in patches, at first gradually extends itself, until the whole plain becomes one rich garden spot, that would delight the eye of even a Pennsylvanian. Noble haciendas, with their neat chapels, and numerous *casas* and huts, for the accommodation of their servile retainers and laborers, arise in every direction. Fields of Indian-corn, wheat, barley, beans, and *chili*—a kind of sweet pepper used extensively all over Mexico—covering sometimes several hundred acres, each, were interspersed with, and agreeably relieved by meadows of rich grass, on which were grazing herds of mules, horses, and beef-cattle, that would have done no discredit to the prairies of Illinois. We were no longer surprised at the abundance prevalent in our camp, and in the market of Puebla. Our commissaries and quarter-masters, with all-potent gold—more potent, unfortunately, in most instances, than patriotism—had tapped these rich fountains



of supply, and we frequently met on the road, *muladas*—caravans of mules—freighted with grain and other products of this luxuriant region, wending their way toward our “head-quarters.” The farther we advanced, the richer and more picturesque the country became. The whole plain, as far as the eye could reach, was dotted with haciendas; the magnificent mansion-houses, and church-spires of which, with their grouping of huts, carried one back to the middle ages, and to the lordly rule of the feudal system. Sometimes these villages—for each estate was a village—were placed on gentle eminences, and embowered by large forest trees of luxuriant foliage. This rich picture of cultivated fields, green meadows filled with herds of cattle, churches and mansion-houses, with their white walls contrasted with the green foliage, as described, was set—to carry out our simile—in a massive and majestic frame of mountains, which encircled it on every side.

Ten miles from Puebla, we crossed the *Rio Prieto*, or Black river, and ten miles farther on, we passed through the village of San Martin, containing about three thousand inhabitants. We looked in vain, in this village, for those evidences of elegance and refinement which wealth begets. There were no handsome residences, no public-houses above the ordinary hostels, or caravan-series of the country, and I did not see half a dozen persons in the streets who appeared to occupy a position above that of a brigand. The mass of the people were a scowling, blanketed, uncouth, and unwashed multitude; looking forth upon us, with the prejudices of race and caste, expressed in their countenances, and with scarcely a ray of intelligence to light them up, and relieve the stolid brutality of their features. It was here, no doubt, as it is in our southern states; the better classes, or the gentry resided on their haciendas, while the tradesmen and mechanics only, congregated in the town. The laborers of the haciendas, of whom we met many on the road, going to and returning from market, were such as I have described the class of predial laborers to be, in the opening chapters of this work. They were clothed in the coarse and scant garments of the country, consisting of blue and brown serge, and wore hoods and overgarments made of a kind of matting which they weave from the leaves of the palm tree. In the bearing of burthens and other

offices of drudgery, there was no difference apparent between the women and the men—a certain evidence, that they had not been in the least degree refined by civilization; for although the females of the laboring classes are compelled to work everywhere, among civilized people there is a marked distinction between the kinds of labor undertaken by the sexes, respectively. We were frequently amused at the philosophic indifference to pain or position manifested by the Indian children, as they performed their journeys slung on the backs of their mothers, half smothered by a load of cabbages or *sacate*. The little elves peered at us, with their bright black eyes, from the mouths of the sacks in which they were ensconced, like so many wild animals; and seemed to be equally as comfortable, whether they had a leg or an arm protruding through a hole in the sack, or were doubled up, within it, like a hedgehog.

As we approached the town, generals *Canalizo* (formerly president *ad interim* of the republic, and whom I had seen two years before, as *president* of a *cockpit*, at St. Augustine, near Mexico, on the occasion of a great feast at that village) and Portillo, with about sixty lancers, who had been stationed at San Martin as a picket of observation upon General Scott's movements, made a hasty retreat, mistaking our advance, no doubt, for that of the vanguard of the army. A number of their countrymen had overtaken and passed us on the road; and if they had stopped a moment to inquire, they might have learned from these, that we bore a white flag, and therefore must be on a mission of peace; but they "saddled up" in too great a hurry. They scampered off in such haste, as to leave their baggage behind them, to forbid all hope of our being able to overtake them, and unnecessarily fatiguing our horses. We permitted them to run on ahead of us, therefore, not caring if they did not halt until they reached the gates of Mexico, as this was precisely the goal we were anxious to reach ourselves. We caught a glimpse of their retreating column at the *Puente Tezmolucan*, and again at the *Rio Frio*.

From San Martin to the *Puente* is eleven miles. Immediately after leaving the former, the road begins to ascend gradually; and in proportion as we ascended, the rich vegetation, which had





accompanied us from *Rio Prieto*, began to disappear, and to give place to a less luxuriant growth of a different type; the pine and mountain-oak beginning now to be seen, and a scant fern to take the place of the juicy grasses of the plain. The *Puente Tezmolucan* is a magnificent stone bridge, erected by the Spaniards, which spans a small stream, that winds its way at the bottom of a deep gorge between the mountains. The bridge is elevated some fifty or sixty feet above the bed of the stream; and the horseman seems to pass in mid-air from one side of the ravine to the other. Many parts of the mountain road we were now traveling, will compare favorably with the Simplon—that noble work of Napoleon—across the Alps. From the *Puente*, the road began to ascend still more rapidly, than it had before done since leaving San Martin; and we soon found ourselves traversing a wild and mountainous region. Occasionally we wound around the sides of mural precipices of solid rock, several hundred feet in height, that scarcely left us room to pass with four or five horsemen abreast. The road at these points, was guarded by parapets, over which one looked down into wild and craggy abysses, many hundred fathoms below. Portions of the mountain scenery around us, reminded me so strongly of our Alleghany scenery in Maryland, that I found myself constantly yielding to the illusion. As we wound upward, our road carried us very near the base of the snow-clad *Iztaccihuatl*, and nothing could exceed the beauty of the contrast, that its serrated crest occasionally presented, with the dark and somber foliage of the mountain pines.

After a ride of forty miles from Puebla, and nine from the *Puente de Tezmolucan*, we reached the *Rio Frio*, or Cold river, at an elevation of 10,119 feet above the level of the sea. This little stream, whose waters are of icy coldness, and perfectly pellucid, and which winds its way over a pebbly bed in a mountain ravine, is regarded as a sort of boundary between Puebla and Mexico. There is an inn and a cluster of huts here; and it is one of the customary halting places, for travelers to refresh themselves at, before undertaking the steep ascent of the mountains beyond. As we descended to the river, we came in full view of the two retreating generals, who were winding their way up the opposite heights. They had, by this time, to all appearance, got some

inking of our bearing a flag of truce, as they alternately halted to inspect the flag, as it came more fully into view, and then, as if doubting the evidence of their senses, or fearing some trick, rode on again. They repeated this two or three times, and for a while we flattered ourselves that they would halt and return to meet us. But their fears seemed finally to get the better of them, and they rode out of sight, before we had reached the *rio*. As a "stern chase is a long chase," especially if the "chase" be a Mexican lancer, and the pursuer an American dragoon, and as Captain Kearney was somewhat fatigued by his long day's ride—we had been ten hours in the saddle—he halted his detachment at the river for the night, and mounting a native Mexican on a fresh horse, dispatched him in pursuit of the fugitives. In an hour or two afterward, our messenger returned, accompanied by one of General Portillo's aids-de-camp; who was not authorized, he said, to permit us to advance farther, or, indeed, to give us any definite reply in regard to the mode in which our dispatches should be delivered, but only to "*arrange preliminaries*" for a meeting between his general and Captain Kearney, the next morning. As we had expected to have our business dispatched in five minutes after our object had been made known to the retreating generals, we had much merriment over our supper—and the old German, who kept the inn, provided us an excellent one—at this characteristic piece of Mexican diplomacy. The Mexican diplomatist, whether civic or military, never does anything in a hurry; he proceeds like his great ancestor of the peninsula, *poco a poco*, and weighs every proposition presented to him deliberately, especially with a view to ascertain, whether there may not be some trick or fraud covered up in it. The "preliminaries" being settled, to wit, that Captain Kearney, with myself as his aid-de-camp, accompanied by five dragoons, would ride forward, on the morrow, to meet General Portillo, who was to be accompanied, in like manner, by one of his aids-de-camp and five lancers, we made ourselves comfortable around the old German's stove—a fire, notwithstanding the occasional severity of the climate in these valleys of the Cordilleras, being a great rarity—and with a bottle of good brandy, which we had brought all the way from Puebla with us—the common *aguardiente* of the country being about on a par with newly

distilled whisky—solaced ourselves after the toils and *chase* of the day. A cold drizzling rain had set in just before dark, and we deemed ourselves fortunate in having found such comfortable quarters, to say nothing of snug and warm stables, and a plenty of straw and oats for our horses. It is true, we had driven the two generals, and their detachment, from these same quarters, forth among the bleak mountains, where they would find no shelter, other than that afforded by a deserted hut, for the next fifteen miles, but then this was the "fortune of war."

When we were ready to retire for the night, a difficulty presented itself. There were half a dozen officers of us, and the old German had but three beds! It became necessary, therefore, once more, to "arrange preliminaries." It was a very important affair, this matter of being bedded or bedless, on a cold, rainy night, in a mountain eyrie perched ten thousand feet and more above the level of the sea. But as brave men have done on other momentous occasions, we trusted everything to the "hazard of the die," and grasping, with a feeling akin to desperation, the greasy leathern dice-box of the old German, threw for our "night's rest" or unrest, as the case might be. Although generally an unlucky dog—as a midshipman, I used invariably to lose my month's pay on the "caballo"—I was among the fortunate winners on this occasion, and I am afraid, had the hard-heartedness, as I tucked in the heavy blankets of the old Dutchman around me, to feel all the more comfortable from the fact of having won the privilege. I soon fell asleep, lulled by a most delightful pattering of the rain on the roof, and an occasional gust of cold wind, as it shook and rattled the window-sash. I must have slept several hours, when I was aroused by what appeared, to my half-sleeping imagination, an infernal shout of demons. I got up and crept very cautiously to the door, whence the sound appeared to proceed, and there, to my astonishment, I beheld a long table spread with viands, and covered with bottles and glasses, and our host about "half-seas-over," holding a midnight revel with about a dozen of our dragoons; who, it seemed, were his fellow countrymen, as they talked as good German as he did, and were not a whit behind him in their exuberant praises of "Faderland." But what astonished me more, was to see my "staff," Seymour—a

Massachusetts lad, born, and bred—sitting coily in the midst of them, with a “drop in his eye,” trying to talk Dutch—not one word of which could the rascal speak! But Seymour “had sailed,” and knew a thing or two more than the “gray jackets” with whom he associated. Having satisfied my curiosity, I returned to my bed, and soon fell asleep again, dreaming of the Rhine, of the dryads and naiads of the Rio Frio, and of the Mexican lancers scampering off before us.

The next morning, after a substantial breakfast, Captain Kearney and I, accompanied by our guide, and a single dragoon to carry our white flag, rode forward to meet General Portillo, as had been agreed upon the previous evening. We immediately began to ascend the last range of mountains that intervened between us, and the great valley of Mexico. We had not traveled more than a couple of miles, however, when we were met by a captain of cavalry, one of the aids of the general, with a white flag in his hand, who, informing us that his chief was on his way to meet us, turned, and rode forward with us. A short distance beyond the *Cuesta del Sueño*—Sleepy Height—we met General Portillo himself, accompanied by another *aid-de-camp*, and the five lancers agreed upon, beside—thus making his force amount to *sight*, whereas but *seven* had been stipulated for in the “treaty.” We were but four. We could not but be amused at this circumstance. The general was a good-looking man, rather stout, of about fifty years of age, and quite dignified and gentleman-like in his manners. Unfortunately, the effect of the *tout ensemble* was spoiled by his being mounted on a small pony, and not being well dressed. The only bad point about his person was a somewhat villanous expression of countenance—which I did not wonder at, so much, when I was informed by our guide, that he had been a prominent actor in the massacre of Fannin. After a mutual salute, we explained to him, briefly, our business, and our orders, if permitted, to enter the city of Mexico and present our dispatches, in person, to the president. But he politely told us, that he had orders from General Canalizo, his chief, to halt us where we were, as no officer from our camp could be permitted to enter the city. It would give him pleasure, he said, to take charge of our dispatches, and forward them safely to their destination. Much as



we wished to get a view of the valley of Mexico—and we were now within seven or eight miles of the point whence this was to be had—we were obliged to forego the pleasure for the present; and so handing over to him our dispatches, we took leave of him. It is hard to outdo a Mexican in politeness, but Captain Kearney and I were determined to have the last bow, and so we bowed his generalship half way back to his lancers, and then turning our horses' heads, with another bow, we commenced our descent to where we had halted our troop. Two of General Canalizo's aids, one a colonel and the other a major, with half a dozen blanketed *lanceros*, accompanied us back as far as the *Puente de Tescmolucan*, to recover the general's baggage, which, in his haste, he had left behind him, at this place, and also to look after his son, a lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, who, with two or three of his men, had got separated from his *papa*.

We passed through San Martin, on our return, a little before night set in, and quartered ourselves at the hacienda of San Bartolo, three or four miles beyond. The last-hour of our ride was through a misty rain, which rendering the various features of the landscape dim and indistinct, without altogether shutting them out from view, presented us with a somber, but pleasing picture of "still life." It having been a grand market day in San Martin, the Indians were returning to their homes, enveloped in their rude mattings, before described, besplashed by the muddy road, and dripping with rain, looking like so many strange and uncouth animals, rather than human beings. Upon our rapping at the door of the *meson* of San Bartolo, and inquiring for quarters, we were told that it was "*ocupado*," that is to say, *full* (the usual Mexican subterfuge), until we threatened to turn some of the families of the village forth into the rain, when the honest *mayordomo* immediately conducted us to the best rooms of the house; which we, indeed, found *ocupado* as he had said, but by pictures of the Virgin and the saints, and a plenty of good, substantial furniture, instead of human beings. It had, in fact, in the absence of the master, been shut up for some time. The movements of the *mayordomo* being somewhat accelerated, upon this discovery, by the rap of a sabre or two on the brick floor—all the houses in Mexico have brick, or dirt floors—he soon threw

open the windows, and dusted and arranged our new domicile for us. We did not fare quite so well here, in the matter of *provisions*, as we had done under the auspices of the old German, at the Rio Frio. "*No hay!*"—we have got none—was the invariable reply to all our inquiries for supper. "*Café?*" "*no hay!*" "*Huevos—eggs?*" "*no hay,*" etc. After considerable difficulty, we made two or three long-legged Indian boys run down several rather antiquated hens that were clucking about the *corral*, and so far prevailed over the cupidity of an old woman, as to induce her to find for us a dozen or so of eggs, with which, with the aid of rice and *chili*, and some coffee we had brought along with us, we caused to be prepared a very excellent supper. There were no knives in the *meson*, but plenty of massive silver forks of a rude construction, and what with these and our pocket-knives, we managed, with much coaxing and ingenuity, to dismember the old fowls. The Mexican makes but little use of the knife at his meals, his fork and his fingers supplying all his necessities. We were in the saddle early the next morning, and were in Puebla by nine o'clock, A. M., having been absent but a little over two days. Although we had had a very agreeable excursion, like the luckless suitor in court, "we took nothing by our petition" in the matter of exchanging prisoners—Santa Anna never deigning to give any reply to General Scott's communication, until we had given him another "licking."

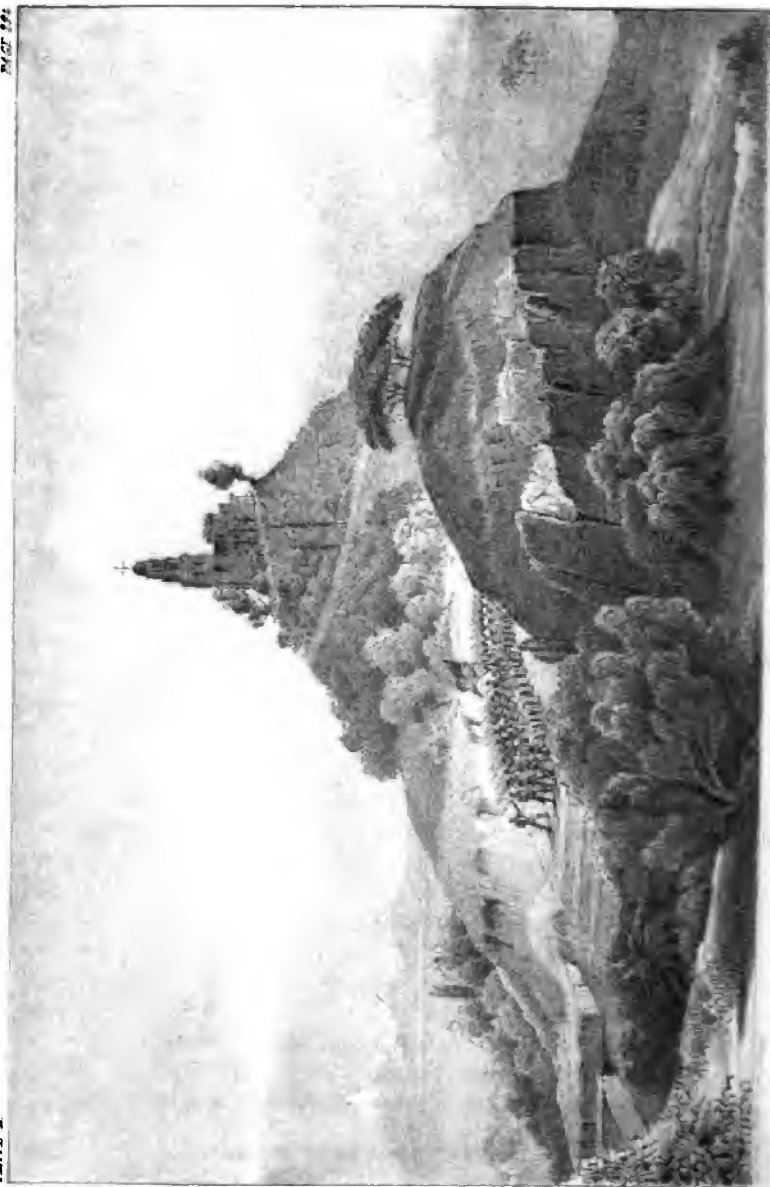
## CHAPTER XV.

**Visit to the pyramid of Cholula—The massacre of Cholula—Escape of Passed-Midshipman Rogers, and his arrival at Puebla—Negotiations for peace commenced by Mr. Trist, through the mediation of the British minister—Struggle between Santa Anna and congress, to evade the responsibility of undertaking these negotiations—Failure of the negotiations—Santa Anna's strategy, military and political—His resignation of the presidency, and subsequent withdrawal of his resignation—General Scott's preparations for a forward movement—Arrival of reinforcements, under generals Pillow, Pearce, and Cadwalader—Arrival of the marines under Colonel Watson—Author is appointed aid-de-camp to General Worth, and joins his military family—Misunderstanding between generals Scott and Worth.**

A FEW days after my return from the expedition described in the last chapter, in company with General Pillow, and a large number of officers, I made a visit to the celebrated pyramid of Cholula, so frequently mentioned in the preceding pages. The 4th Artillery preceded us at an early hour, and a company of the 3d Dragoons gave us escort. The morning was very fine, and the landscape, as usual, was seen through that peculiar atmosphere of the highland tropics, which brought forth every feature of it, in that bold and beautiful distinctness so often described.—The long line of infantry that preceded us—the 4th Artillery was acting as infantry—and our gay cavalcade of officers, glittering in their red, and blue, and gold, presented a pleasing and animated picture. Cholula is situated to the north-west of Puebla, and is distant from it about six miles. It seemed, as we rode toward it, to lie at the very base of Popocatepetl, but it is many leagues distant. It has the appearance of a natural mound—common in these plains—covered by a growth of shrubs and forest trees. It is truncated, and its apex is crowned by a picturesque Gothic temple, embowered by venerable and frondiferous trees, to all appearance, from two to three centuries old. It is thus, independently of its associations, a beautiful feature of the landscape.

As we approached it, we threw it upon a back-ground of snow—the crest of Iztaccihuatl—and so perfect was the picture in all its minute outlines, and finish, that we paused with an exclamation of delight, to look upon it. A road winds round the pyramid, from its base to its top, and without dismounting we rode up to the church door, and hitched our horses beneath the fine old forest trees. The terrace on which the church stands is one hundred and sixty-five feet square, and is surrounded by a parapet, against which stone benches have been constructed for the accommodation of visitors. The church, as appears from an inscription over the principal doorway, was built in 1666. It is dedicated to “our Lady of Remedies of Cholula;” and sundry tablets and other offerings suspended from the walls, attest the belief of the pious Indians of the neighborhood, in the miraculous interposition of “our Lady,” in effecting a number of cures of the sick and maimed, that had resorted hither to implore her clemency. The pyramid of Cholula, unlike those of Egypt, is not wholly of artificial structure. From a narrow inspection which I gave it, I came to the conclusion that it had originally been a natural mound, which the Indians had reduced to its present shape, and covered with successive layers of masonry. It is solid—having no chambers within—and the interior mass, after penetrating through the outer walls, is of earth. Its shape is quadrangular—each side, at the base, being thirteen hundred feet in length—and it is divided into three terraces. It thus resembles, in form, the grand *Teccalli* of Mexico, as described to us by Bernal Diaz, and was used by the natives, as we know from positive testimony, for similar purposes; that is, for the offering up of sacrifices to their gods. The walls, and the pavements of the terraces, were constructed of the *adobe*, or sun-dried brick, interspersed with small stones, and a concrete of mortar and pebbles. Having provided myself with a pocket sextant and a tape-line, I traced a base-line in the plain below, and with the assistance of my friend, Captain Wayne, made the height of the pyramid above the point where we stood—about five hundred yards northward—two hundred and five feet. This measurement differs considerably from that of Humboldt—he making it less—but we repeated our observations several times, examined well the adjustment of our instrument,





and could hardly have been mistaken in so simple an operation.—Humboldt has made some strange mistakes, too, with regard to the height of the great pyramids near Tezcoco (see Waddy Thomson's *Recollections of Mexico*). It is probable the great traveler relied upon information obtained from others; or he may have been deceived by the imperfection of his instruments. The church on the terrace above, from its base to the top of its cross, measured ninety-five feet; thus giving a total elevation of church and pyramid of three hundred feet. In these computations I have neglected the fractions of a foot.

It was in good taste, instead of destroying, as zealots have done on other occasions, this magnificent monument of the ancient civilization of our continent, to crown it with a church of the true God. This small and unpretending Gothic temple, seated on the top of the pyramid of Cholula, embowered by druidical forest trees, looking over the vast plain of Puebla, and in turn looked down upon by the everlasting mountains, with their winding-sheets of snow, was to my mind the most befitting place for the worship of the Most High, I had ever beheld; and I have looked with eyes of admiration, upon some of the most imposing and famous cathedrals, which the combined pride and religion of man have reared to commemorate their races and their creeds. How many historical recollections, too, thronged the mind of the American, as he looked forth from the top of that height, upon the surrounding plain, beheld the flag of his country waving from the distant government house of Puebla, and listened to Anglo-Saxon voices, the clanking of steel, and the tread of cavalry, as these sounds awakened the echoes of the old pyramid!

The present town of Cholula stands on the north-west of the pyramid, and is built, as are most of the towns in Mexico, of the *adobe*. The population, to all appearance, was less advanced in civilization, than their ancestors had been three centuries before. Ruins were strewn around in all directions, giving evidence of the former populousness of the dead city, and contrasting painfully, the ideas of by-gone opulence and splendor to which they gave rise, with the squalor and poverty of the present inhabitants. A few patches of corn and beans, inclosed by the magney, and a few

shops, where *serapes* and *pulque* were sold, were all that remained of the wealth of the Mecca of the Cordilleras !

I have already alluded to the famous massacre which was committed here by Cortez ; and as it is one of the most startling events attending the march and conquest of the great captain, I shall make no apology to the reader for giving him a brief outline of it, as it has been handed down to us by Bernal Diaz, who was an eye-witness. Cortez, after having formed a league with the Tlascalans, not being satisfied with the deportment of the Cholulans, who had not sent him ambassadors, with offers of submission, as the other surrounding tribes had done, resolved to pay them a visit before setting out for Mexico. Having encamped over night on the banks of the little stream, which the reader has already had pointed out to him, he approached the city, the next day, with all his people, something short of five hundred men, and with six thousand of his allies, the Tlascalans. The principal chiefs and priests went forth to meet him, with censers of burning incense in their hands, and after the usual ceremonies, invited him to enter their gates, with his Totonacs—these were some Indians who had accompanied him from the sea-coast—but requested that he would not permit the Tlascalans to enter, as these latter were their enemies. He accordingly encamped the Tlascalans outside the walls, and entered with the remainder of his forces. He was received with great demonstrations of friendship, and was lodged, with all his troops, in spacious houses, and for the first few days was abundantly supplied with provisions. At the end of this time, however, the provisions began to grow scarce, and he was supplied with bread and water only. Nor was this the only indication of their altered intentions toward him. The Totonacs, in prying about the town, had discovered a number of *trous de loup*—pit-falls—with sharpened stakes driven in them, and carefully covered over, apparently for the destruction of the cavalry. Several of the Tlascalan soldiers stationed outside the walls, also informed Cortez, that they had seen large numbers of women and children leaving the city ; a sign among these people that a war was near at hand. Piles of stones had also been discovered on the flat tops of the houses. Finally, a Cholulan lady, who had become quite



intimate with *Doña Marina*—a Tabascan princess, whom Cortez had brought along with him, as an interpreter—begged her to save herself in her house, from the danger that threatened the Spaniards; whereupon, *Doña Marina*, who was much attached to Cortez, with feminine tact, wormed out of her friend all the particulars of a foul conspiracy, which had been set on foot by the natives, for the destruction of the *Teules*, or white men. Upon being questioned by Cortez, this lady admitted that her countrymen, in concert with twenty thousand Mexicans, had formed a plan to massacre him and all his followers; the Mexicans being then encamped not a great way from the city. Cortez, not satisfied with these facts, caused *Doña Marina* to entice two priests into her house, who confirmed all the Cholulan lady had said.—Being at length convinced of the treachery intended him, he resolved to take fearful vengeance of his hosts. He at first called together the principal persons of the city, and demanded of them whether they had any complaints to make of himself or his followers; and if so, to state them openly like men of honor, and he would redress them. They replied they had none; but on the contrary, were ready to supply him with everything he needed for his march. Cortez accepted this offer, and appointed the following day to set out; the Cholulans departing highly pleased, thinking that things were in proper train, and that their meditated treachery had not been discovered. The great captain now assembled his chiefs, and laying before them all the facts, as above disclosed, demanded to know of them what was best to be done. Some were in favor of returning to Tlascala, but the majority submitted their judgment to that of their commander. The latter, who had already made up his mind, and probably only called this council of war out of respect to his associates, announced briefly his determination, and settled the programme of the great tragedy which was to come off on the morrow. The next day, the Spaniards saddled up their horses, got ready their artillery and arms, and formed themselves in military array (as if for departure), in the courtyard of their quarters, which they designed should be the principal theater of their revenge. The *tamemes*, or burthen-bearers, who had been promised them by the Cholulans to carry their baggage, arrived at the dawn of day accompanied by some

forty nobles. As soon as they had entered the halls and chambers of the palace to get the baggage, guards were placed over them to prevent their egress. In the meantime, other nobles arrived with their troops, who were to form the guard of honor on the occasion. These were, in like manner, permitted to enter the courtyard, but denied egress, until all the principal nobility of Cholula were assembled in this huge slaughter-pen. Cortez, mounted on horseback, now spoke in the following terms, to the wondering and curious assemblage: "I, gentlemen, have done everything in my power to conciliate your good will. I entered peaceably into this city: and neither I, nor any of my followers have done you the least injury; on the contrary, in order that you might have no cause of complaint, I have not permitted the Tlascalcan troops to enter. Beside, I have requested you to declare freely, whether you had suffered any wrong, in order that I might redress it; but with detestable perfidy, you have hid, under the semblance of friendship, the most cruel treachery, the object of which was to put to death myself and all my people. I am fully aware of all your malignant projects." Then calling to one side, four or five Cholulans, he asked them what had induced them to enter into so despicable a plot. They replied that the Mexican ambassadors, to please their sovereign, had induced them to undertake it. Cortez, then, with a countenance lighted up with rage, spoke thus to the ambassadors who were present: "These wicked persons, in order to excuse their crime, accuse you and your king of treachery—but I do not believe you capable of such baseness; nor can I persuade myself that the great Montezuma can have become so bitter an enemy of mine, after having shown me so many proofs of his friendship—nor that having the ability to oppose my pretensions openly, he would resort to treachery to frustrate them. I will, therefore, cause your persons to be respected, while I give these perverse men a lesson, which they will long remember.—They shall this day perish, and their city shall be destroyed. I call heaven and earth to witness, that it is their treachery which causes us to commit an act so abhorrent to our inclinations."

Having finished this harangue, he gave the signal for the attack, which was the discharge of a musket, and the Spaniards rushed with such sanguinary fury upon the terror-stricken multi-

trade, that not one of that vast assemblage was left alive ! Rivalets of blood flowed through the yard, and the screams and groans of the dying were sufficient to have turned the hearts of the most obdurate to mercy. The gates of the *corral* were now thrown open, and the Spaniards sallied forth into the streets, and sheathed their bloody swords, indiscriminately, in every one they met. The Tlascalans, at the same time, rushed into the city, and like blood-thirsty tigers—their ferocity sharpened by their hatred of their enemies, and their desire to please their new allies—commenced also the work of death. So horrible and unexpected a blow threw the inhabitants into the greatest consternation ; but having rallied, after the first surprise, they collected together, and made a vigorous resistance, until they saw the terrible ravages committed by the cannon, when they were again thrown into disorder, and retreated in the utmost alarm. The majority saved themselves by flight, but the more superstitious (or rather, ought not we to say, the more religious ?) ran to the great temple—the pyramid—and endeavored to throw down its walls, in obedience to an ancient tradition, to the effect, that when the walls of this pyramid should be thrown down, their gods would flood the city, and so destroy their enemies. But finding their labor in vain, they shut themselves up in their houses and temples. But this did not avail them, for the Spaniards set fire to every house where they found any resistance. Thus, in the midst of burning houses and temples, the slaughter went on. The streets were filled with dead bodies, some of them half devoured by the flames, and no other sounds were heard, but the insulting bravadoes of the confederates—the wail of the multitude—the execrations of the victims, and their wild complaints against their gods, for having abandoned them in such an extremity. What is most remarkable in this awful tragedy is, that of all those devotees who fled to the temples, there was but a single one who surrendered himself to the enemy—all the rest, either perished miserably in the flames, or sought a more speedy death by leaping from the temple walls, and crushing themselves in pieces. In this horrible affair, there perished six thousand Cholulans, and the city remained for a long time depopulated. To crown their glory the more completely, the Spaniards sacked the houses and

temples, and took possession of all the jewels, gold and silver; leaving to their confederates, the Tlascalans, as their share of the plunder, the clothing, feather work, provisions and salt.

Such was the massacre of Cholula, about which, strange to say, historians have differed. Some writers, blinded by the dazzling career of Cortez, maintain that he was justified in committing so great an outrage upon humanity, by the circumstances—many of the latter of which, in my opinion, were wholly fanciful. If an example had been wanted, it would have been quite sufficient, to have seized a few of the ringleaders, and put them to death. Cortez knew full well, that Montezuma was at the bottom of the plot, if plot there was, but with consummate art, he pretended to disbelieve it; and then the subsequent sacking of the city, and the appropriation to himself and his followers, of all the jewels, and gold and silver found, throws over the whole affair, a suspicion, which, unfortunately for the great captain, will rest forever as a stain upon his escutcheon. His own countryman, Las Casas, condemns him; and as the venerable bishop of *Chiapas* followed close on the heels of the conquest, his testimony should be sufficient for posterity.

August 2d. To-day, my mission was suddenly brought to a close, by the appearance of the gentleman of whom I was in pursuit. Much to my surprise, as well as gratification, an "orderly" came to inform me, that Passed-Midshipman Rogers was at the head-quarters of the general-in-chief. This young gentleman had, indeed, made his escape from the city of Mexico, two days before; and with the assistance of a guide, supplied him by an English friend, had threaded his way in safety, over the mountains, by the old and unfrequented route between Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl; thence through Cholula, and so on into Puebla. I had no thought, however, of returning to the squadron, now that we were on the eve of commencing our glorious campaign, and I found, on consulting my late "secretary of legation"—now *hors du combat* in the diplomatic line—that he was not at all inclined to regard his "revel" with the old German at the Rio Frio, as an equivalent for the greater "revel in the halls," which he had promised himself. I had an excellent excuse, too, for remaining with the army, as our communications with Vera Cruz had been,

for some time, cut off, except as they were occasionally reopened by the upward passage to us of reinforcements. Mr. Rogers, also, was as anxious as myself to revisit, as a conqueror, the capital in which he had spent so many dreary months as a prisoner; and so it was soon settled between us, that we should remain, and at the opportune moment, seek some proper positions for ourselves in the ranks of our military brethren, where we might render such humble aid in the coming battles, as the country had a right to expect of us, under the circumstances. Even the services of a "horse-marine" might not be unavailable in the desperate struggle which was to ensue, between our "handful" of an army, and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy.

While General Scott had, as we have seen, been making his military preparations for an advance upon the great valley, Mr. Trist had not been idle. This gentleman, whom we left at Jalapa, had accompanied General Twiggs' division in its march upon Puebla, and had reached head-quarters a few days after the arrival of the general-in-chief. The misunderstanding between General Scott and himself continuing for some weeks after their arrival in Puebla, and the former manifesting no disposition to put the latter in communication with the Mexican government, the friendly offices of the British minister, Mr. Packenham, were invoked. This gentleman, with a ready courtesy, consenting to become a medium of communication, Mr. Trist, toward the latter part of June, forwarded through him, to the Mexican minister of foreign affairs, the following dispatch from Mr. Buchanan, our secretary of state :

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *Washington, April 15, 1847.*

"To his Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Relations of the Mexican Republic.

"SIR:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's note of the 22d of February last, in answer to mine of the 18th of January, proposing, on the part of the president of the United States, immediately to 'dispatch, either to the Havana or Jalapa, as the Mexican government may prefer, one or more of our most distinguished citizens, as commissioners clothed with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace with similar commis-

sioners, on the part of Mexico, as soon as he shall be officially informed that the Mexican government will appoint such commissioners.'

"The president deeply regrets the refusal of the Mexican government to accede to this friendly overture 'unless the raising of the blockade of our [Mexican] ports, and the complete evacuation of the territory of the republic by the invading forces shall be previously accepted as a preliminary condition.'

"The president has instructed me to inform you that this 'preliminary condition' is wholly inadmissible. Such a condition is neither required by the honor, nor sanctioned by the practice of nations. If it were, this would tend to prolong wars, especially between conterminous countries, until the one or the other power was entirely subdued. No nation, which at the expenditure of blood and treasure, has invaded its enemy's country and acquired possession of any considerable portion of his territory, could ever consent to withdraw its forces, as a preliminary condition to the opening of negotiations for peace. This would be at once to abandon all the advantages it had obtained in the prosecution of the war, without any certainty that peace would result from the sacrifice. Nay, more; should such a negotiation prove unsuccessful, the nation which had thus imprudently withdrawn its forces from the enemy's territory, might not be able to recover, even at a cost of blood and treasure equal to that first expended, the advantageous position which it had voluntarily abandoned.

"Fortunately for the cause of peace and humanity, the history of nations at war affords no sanction to such a preliminary condition. The United States are as jealous of their national honor as any power on the face of the earth; and yet it never entered into the contemplation of the great statesmen, who administered our government during the period of our last war with Great Britain, to insist that the latter should relinquish that portion of our territory of which she was in actual possession, before they would consent to open negotiations for peace. On the contrary, they took the initiative, and appointed commissioners to treat for peace while portions of our territory were held by the enemy; and it is a remarkable fact, that the treaty of Ghent was concluded by the plenipotentiaries of the two powers, while the war was raging on

both sides, and the most remarkable of the conflicts to which it gave rise took place upon our own soil, after the negotiators had happily terminated their labors. History is full of such examples. Indeed, so far as the undersigned is aware, there is not to be found, at least in modern times, a single case, except the present, in which it has been considered a necessary preliminary, that an invading army should be withdrawn before negotiations for peace could commence between the parties to the war.

“It would also be difficult to find a precedent for the course pursued by the Mexican government in another particular. The president, anxious to avoid the war now existing, sent a minister of peace to Mexico for this purpose. After the Mexican forces had attacked the army of General Taylor, on this side of the Rio Grande, and thus commenced the war, the president, actuated by the same friendly spirit, has made repeated overtures to the government of Mexico to negotiate for its termination. And although he has, from the beginning, solemnly declared before the world, that he desired no terms but such as were just and honorable for both parties; yet the Mexican government, by refusing to receive our minister, in the first place, and afterward, by not acceding to our overtures to open negotiations for peace, has never afforded to this government even the opportunity of making known the terms on which we would be willing to settle all questions in dispute between the two republics. The war can never end while Mexico refuses even to hear the proposals, which we have always been ready to make, for peace.

“The president will not again renew the offer to negotiate, at least until he shall have reason to believe that it would be accepted by the Mexican government. Devoted, however, to honorable peace, he is determined that the evils of war shall not be protracted one day longer than shall be rendered absolutely necessary by the Mexican republic. For the purpose of carrying this determination into effect, with the least possible delay, he will forthwith send to the head-quarters of the army in Mexico, Nicholas P. Trist, Esq., the officer next in rank to the undersigned in our department of foreign affairs, as a commissioner invested with full powers to conclude a definite treaty of peace with the united Mexican states. This gentleman possesses the entire confidence

of the president, and is eminently worthy of that of the Mexican government.

"The undersigned refrains from all comment upon the concluding paragraph, as well as some other portions of your excellency's note, because the strong sense he entertains of their injustice toward the United States, could not be uttered in the friendly tone which he desires to preserve in the present communication. He turns from these, therefore, to dwell, as he does with unfeigned pleasure, upon a sentiment contained in an early part of the same note, where the Mexican government expresses how painful it is 'to see disturbed the sincere friendship which is cultivated with your [our] republic, whose continued progress it has always admired, and whose institutions have served it as a model.'

"This feeling is most cordially reciprocated by the president, whose earnest desire it is that the united Mexican states, under institutions similar to our own, may protect and secure the liberty of their people, and attain an elevated standing among the nations of the earth.

"The undersigned embraces the occasion to offer to your excellency the assurance of his most distinguished consideration.

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

No government, perhaps, ever practiced more forbearance toward an enemy, not only in the discussions preceding the war, but in the delicacy with which the war was conducted, than did the administration of Mr. Polk toward Mexico. After all diplomatic intercourse had ceased, by the withdrawal of the respective ministers, our government, in its note of the 17th June, 1845, proposed to the Mexican republic, to send a commissioner to meet one on the part of that republic, to endeavor to settle amicably the questions in dispute between the two countries. The Mexican government, in its note of the 15th October of the same year, agreed to receive such commissioner. The mission of Mr. Slidell, of which the reader has been informed, was the consequence. On the 18th of January, 1847—after the battles of the Rio Grande and Monterey—the United States renewed their proposition to enter into negotiations. On the 22d of February of the same year, the Mexican government replied that it would receive a



commissioner and enter into negotiations, on the condition of a previous withdrawal of our troops from its territory, and a raising of the blockade of its ports. Our government, although it refused to accede to these unreasonable demands, nevertheless appointed, as we have seen by the above letter of Mr. Buchanan, a special commissioner to proceed to the head-quarters of its armies, and thence to announce to the Mexican government, his readiness to receive any propositions the latter might have to make. Vera Cruz had now been captured; the battle of Cerro Gordo had been fought; our army had occupied Puebla; quiet possession had been taken of New Mexico; Upper California had been secured, and our naval forces, in both seas, had reduced to subjection all the principal maritime ports. If the object of the United States, in entering upon the war with Mexico, had been *conquest*, as has been charged by foreign nations, and by political partisans at home, here was her enemy prostrate at her feet. She had only to rivet the chains, which she had already imposed; but with a magnanimity, highly creditable to those who were at the head of affairs in our country, she still held forth the olive branch, and endeavored to stop the effusion of blood. It is true, the new commissioner was instructed to require a cession of a portion of the enemy's contiguous territory, as a compensation—the only one which he could make us, in the impoverished condition of his finances—to indemnify us, in part, for the enormous expenses of the war, to which we had been unnecessarily subjected. But the acquisition of this territory, as desirable as it was to us on many accounts, formed no motive for the war; and there can be no question that the war would never have occurred, had Mexico submitted, with a little more common sense, to the independence and subsequent annexation of Texas. New Mexico and California would, no doubt, have fallen into our confederacy, as the ripe fruit drops to the ground, but no rude hand would have been put forth to gather them, and probably the consummation would not have occurred for several generations. If nations will be silly, and bully and insult their neighbors into wars, on questions on which they are clearly in the wrong, they should be made to bear the burthens of these wars, and thus do penance for their folly.

The presentation of Mr. Buchanan's letter produced great excitement in Mexico, among the tribe of politicians, each one of whom was either trying, by means of the war, to hold on to office, or to ride into it. Badly beaten as they were, at all points, and convinced, as at least the more intelligent of them could not but be, that they were engaged in a hopeless struggle, in which the issue was one of national life and death, they nevertheless proclaimed "war to the knife," and endeavored each to outdo his neighbor, in the loudness of his vociferation. What cared they for the ultimate fate of the country; they were politicians hungering after office, and the war-cry was popular? The congress—a constituent congress which had been called together on the accession of Santa Anna, to re-enact the constitution of 1824—which had adjourned a short time before, was convoked anew, in order that Mr. Buchanan's dispatch might be laid before it. The American reader, acquainted with the distribution of powers under our constitution, is, of course, wondering why the Mexican executive did not act upon this letter, before referring the subject-matter of it to congress. A word or two of explanation will be necessary. In Mexico, unlike with us, the congress had frequently been invested with by the people, or had assumed extraordinary powers. There was no warrant for this in the constitution; but in the military disorders which had so frequently prevailed in the country, rendering dictatorships and provisional governments necessary, the practice had grown up and been acquiesced in. The present congress being a constituent one, had, on the 20th of April, declared that any Mexican who should listen to terms of accommodation with the enemy, should be deemed a traitor. It had beside, in the same decree, so far restricted the functions of the executive, as to prohibit him from "making a peace with the enemy."

The members of congress were very dilatory in getting together; some pleading their inability to pay their traveling expenses, unless they were advanced to them by the government; some complaining of the infestation of the roads by robbers; some of one thing and some another; but all endeavoring to avoid the responsibility of committing themselves, otherwise than on the stump, on the question of peace or war. The war question was

just now popular; but if the country should be further beaten, and reduced to the necessity of making further concessions, their rejection of our proposals might be thrown up to them, in after canvasses for office. A quorum—seventy-four—was gotten together, however, on the 13th of July, when an amusing struggle took place between it and the president—General Santa Anna; each trying to throw the responsibility of taking the initiative, in regard to our propositions, on the other. Congress declared, in a report which was made by a committee of three, with Señor Otero at its head, and which was adopted by a vote of 52 to 22, that the 110th article of the constitution provides that “the executive of the union shall direct all diplomatic relations, and shall celebrate all treaties of peace, friendship, alliance, truce, federation, armed neutrality, commerce, and of whatever other nature; referring said treaties to congress for ratification, before they shall be considered binding;” and that the 15th section of the same article, “devolves exclusively upon the executive, the duty of receiving ministers and other employées of foreign powers,” and that consequently, it was the duty of the president to receive Mr. Trist, and act upon his proposals, before having recourse to their body. “With regard to any other extraordinary powers,” continues the report, “which were conferred on this body by the ‘Plan of the *Ciudadela*,’ and the convocatory law thence issued for calling it together, these powers have become *functus officio*, by the adoption of the new constitution; and consequently, the decree of the 20th of April, limiting the prerogatives of the executive, has ceased to exist.” In reply to this report, General Santa Anna, through his minister, Pacheco, addressed a lengthy message to the house, in which he maintained that his hands were still tied by the decree of the 20th of April, and that according to his understanding of his constitutional duties, he could not receive Mr. Trist, nor consider his proposals, unless this decree were repealed. “The constituent congress still existing [else, he asks of this body, how came you here?] all the powers with which it was invested, exist also—and consequently, it is not sufficient for congress to declare that the decree of the 20th of April does not exist, since its declaration does not amount to a repeal; and I am as competent to judge of its existence, or non-existence, as con-

gress is. The adoption of the new constitution has made no change, as congress has indirectly declared by its own acts, it having exercised some of its extraordinary functions, since the adoption of this instrument." \* \* \* \* \* The whole difficulty between the legislative and executive bodies, being, as the reader perceives by the above extracts, the existence or non-existence of the decree of the 20th of April, it would have been an easy matter for congress to repeal the decree, in form, which it contended, did not exist; but it feared that by so doing, it might give color to the idea, that it had encouraged the executive to receive our propositions. The executive, on the other hand, might have been satisfied with the declaration of congress to the effect, that the decree did not exist; so far as it apprehended any censure from the people, of unduly exercising its functions; but the fact is, that neither intended to do anything more, than endeavor to outwit the other, and evade the responsibility of being the first to encourage the reception of our minister, and his proposals for peace.

The whole discussion was eminently *Mexican*; and if it does not rank very high in common sense, it is at least to be admired for its Machiavelian diplomacy. It is amusing too, to one acquainted with the history of the parties, to witness this virtuous struggle of theirs to keep within the limits of their constitutional duties! General Santa Anna splitting hairs with a Mexican congress, on constitutional law! Whatever may be said of these gentlemen in the field, they are, unquestionably, astute special pleaders in council. They humbugged Mr. Polk into sending Mr. Slidell to Mexico, and into permitting General Santa Anna to pass; they humbugged General Taylor into granting them an armistice of six weeks, at Monterey, under pretense that they were anxious for peace; and they endeavored to humbug us again this time, by inducing us to withdraw our land forces, and raise the blockade of their ports, as a "preliminary" to negotiation; but they missed it. We must go ahead now, and give them two or three more floggings; but ten to one, before we enter the city of Mexico, I shall have to record their having humbugged General Scott more than once. *Punica fides*, except for its being classic, ought, unquestionably, to be changed into *fides Mexicana*. General Santa

Anna not only dared not treat with us, in consequence of the adverse current of public opinion, but as a military man, he was naturally anxious to try again the fortune of war. As often as he had been beaten, he could not humble himself to the belief, that he and his countrymen were our inferiors. His self-love had various other excuses to offer him for his disasters. In his dispatches and private letters, he blindly raved against fate, and accused his confederates of treason; a charge which is very commonly made in Mexico, and being often made, must occasionally be true. With great energy he busied himself in fortifying the capital, and in collecting and organizing troops. He was not idle, either, as a politician; but resorted to various artifices to strengthen himself and disarm party opposition. One of these artifices was the resignation of his office, which he made to congress.—With the hope that this resignation would not be accepted, but that the nation, through its representatives, would insist upon his remaining at the head of affairs, at the same time that it granted him additional powers for carrying on the war, he drew up an egotistical document, announcing his desire of retiring to private life, and laying down the burthens and cares of office. This paper, being presented to congress, unfortunately for him, did not produce the effect he had intended. It was not immediately acted upon, as he had hoped it would be, by the nation's throwing itself at his feet, and entreating him to save it. The members of congress, on the contrary, began to discuss and consider it, and to cast around them for a successor. Things beginning thus to become serious, the magnanimous general became alarmed; and as the only means of saving himself, hastily withdrew the document. In his "withdrawal of his resignation," he used the following language: "When I tendered my resignation of the supreme command of the republic, I was actuated by powerful motives, which I made known to congress, and by others which I deemed it proper to conceal from the public view. Every day convinces me more and more, of the solidity and propriety of these reasons; nevertheless, I have been waiting, now many days [only five], the decision of the legislative body, experiencing not only the inconveniences inseparable from a position already too much complicated, but those which result from the state of expectation and anxiety,

in which the public finds itself, and which produces, every instant, new phases in the political drama. I have requested that my resignation should be immediately acted upon, in order that, without abandoning my post, my successor might be indicated. I was induced to make this request, not only by my desire to retire, as speedily as practicable, from the very difficult position in which I found myself; but because I was convinced that the least delay would keep alive public agitation, and probably lead to events which might change the face of affairs. I desired, with impatience, that some other person should succeed me, as the invading army did not intend moving immediately upon the capital, and the new chief of the state would have had ample time to attend to the public defense—but I learn now, that the enemy's forces are about to march, and may be expected from one moment to another [we did not march for two months afterward]; we should thus suffer an invasion of the capital, at the same time that we changed the government, which would be hazardous, and might decide the fate of the war. The news of my withdrawal from the supreme power, has, as I have understood, caused this movement of the enemy. [General Scott never paid the least attention to it.] This is an affair of much importance, and demands of me a prompt decision, that I may save the capital. Since I presented my resignation, I have received new testimonials of confidence from all classes, and from the most influential persons in society. I perceive that these persons have a fixed resolve of causing me to abandon my intention (their resolve being founded upon a conviction of the necessity of preserving the actual state of things, in order not to hazard the safety of this populous city, and the nation). \* \* \* \* \* I am going, therefore, to make this last and painful sacrifice—the sacrifice of my self-love; and I have decided to withdraw the resignation, which I presented on the 28th ult., which from this moment will be regarded as though it had never been presented."

Being thus forced to unmask himself, this astute constitutional lawyer, who, a little while ago, was splitting hairs with the congress, now assumed and exercised dictatorial powers, and proceeded, without the intervention or authority of congress, to levy forced contributions upon the inhabitants of the capital; taking

care to spare his friends, while he bore down with a heavy hand upon his enemies. The church, as usual, went to the wall, and was made to bear its full proportion of the burthens; His Excellency putting its duty to contribute, on the grounds that "the clergy cannot in conscience consent to the domination of a people, which admits as a dogma of its political creed, the tolerance of all religious sects," and that "the sacrifice of a portion of their effects would relieve them from the danger of losing the rest, together with those privileges which are upheld by our laws, but denied by those of the United States."

The following schedule will give the reader an idea of the manner in which these things are done in our sister republic:

*Contributions levied by order of General Santa Anna on certain corporations and individuals in the city of Mexico, a short time previous to General Scott's march upon that capital.*

4 convents and 14 individuals, at 3000 each,	\$54,000
8 individuals, at 2500 "	20,000
1 cathedral and 3 individuals, at 2250 "	9,000
4 convents and 8 do. at 2000 "	24,000
6 do. etc., and 7 do. at 1500 "	19,500
4 individuals, at 1200 "	4,800
2 convents and 30 individuals, at 1000 "	32,000
4 do. and 6 do. at 900 "	9,000
1 college and 5 do. at 800 "	4,800
2 convents and 12 do. at 750 "	10,500
4 individuals at 700 "	2,800
13 do. at 600 "	7,800
16 do. at 500 "	8,000
4 colleges, convents, etc., } and 41 individuals, }	at 450 " 20,250
Archbishop and 7 individuals, at 400 "	3,200
56 individuals, at 300 "	16,800
1 convent and 5 do. at 250 "	1,500
1 do. and 16 do. at 200 "	3,400
12 colleges, convents, etc., } and 117 individuals, }	at 150 " 19,350
5 individuals, at 125 "	625

43 individuals,	at 100 each,	4,300
4 churches, colleges, etc., } and 176 individuals, }	at 50 "	9,000
13 churches, colleges, etc., } and 237 individuals, }	at 25 "	6,250
Total,		\$280,875

Soon after leaving Jalapa, General Scott saw the necessity of abandoning his first idea of carrying on the war on the magnificent scale of garrisoning all the posts in his rear, and which old rule of European tactics I have endeavored to show, was inapplicable to his condition, and to the nature of the war in which he was engaged, and withdrew Lieutenant-Colonel Childs and his detachment.

On the 8th June, a large train of wagons—five hundred—and a detachment of about two thousand five hundred men, all under the command of General Pillow, arrived in Puebla. A portion of this train, under Colonel McIntosh, was attacked at the *Paseo de Ovejas*, and lost about forty wagons, and some thirty-five or forty men, killed and wounded. General Cadwallader, in command of six hundred men, came up with this train. A court of inquiry was held to inquire into the circumstances attending Colonel McIntosh's loss, which resulted in the acquittal of the gallant old soldier of all blame; but facts were developed during the investigation, showing that many of our men, who were raw recruits, had behaved badly before the enemy.

On the 6th August, General Pierce arrived in command of two thousand five hundred men, including a detachment of three hundred marines, under Colonel Watson. These men, with the exception of the marines, all belonged to the ten new regiments, which had been authorized by congress soon after the commencement of the war. Many of the officers of these corps were very *hard-looking citizens*, who, apparently, required much drilling and "breaking in," to be rendered serviceable. Their uniforms looked as though they had been made by the "tailor of the village" whence the appointed came; they sat their horses awkwardly, and wore their arms and spurs, like very clever country gentle-



men, who might have figured, on a race course, or at an election, but who had evidently had but little acquaintance with barracks or battle-field. The most shameful disregard of the claims of the "old officers" had been practiced in filling up these new regiments, and a general disgust was the consequence—not that these officers expected civilians to be entirely excluded, but they thought themselves entitled to at least a share of the appointments. They forgot, for a moment, that they were not politicians, entitled to be conciliated and "sopped," but the patriotic defenders of their country, removed from the precincts of the ballot-box.

General Scott's forces now amounted to about thirteen thousand men, which, after making the necessary deductions for a garrison he intended to leave at Puebla, and the large numbers of invalids in the hospitals, would leave him a marching force of between eleven and twelve thousand. Thus, after waiting four months, and giving the enemy ample time to recruit and strengthen himself, he was but little, if any, better prepared for offensive operations than he had been before he discharged the volunteers at Jalapa, and by that act, lost the glorious opportunity of seizing, by a *coup de main*, the enemy's capital! Other reinforcements would soon be up, consisting of volunteer regiments which were being actively called out, and forwarded to the seat of war; but he decided upon waiting no longer, and with that small force, we put ourselves in motion for the terminus of our campaign.

A few days before our march, Lieutenant Shubrick of the navy, who had come up with the marines, was invited to occupy a position on the staff of General Shields—one of whose regiments—the gallant Palmetto—came from his native state; and Mr. Rogers and myself, in accordance with our pre-determination, were announced in general orders, as *aids-de-camp* of generals Pillow and Worth, respectively. I now took an affectionate leave of my messmates, with whom I had journeyed so long, and became a member of General Worth's military family. One of my first services was to carry an order to, poor Ransom, the gallant Colonel of the 9th, who was afterward killed in the storm of Chapultepec. Ransom and I had, some years before, been shipmates on board the frigate *Constellation*; and as we confronted each other—we had not met since—I, with my heavy cavalry sabre

and immense Mexican spurs, and he, in the jaunty uniform of a colonel of infantry, which became him so well, we were so amused by the mutual transformation, that our first salutation was a hearty laugh. Fortune had, indeed, played us many strange freaks since we had left the good old frigate in the harbor of Pensacola; and not the least strange of all those freaks, was the converting us both into soldiers, and sending us forth on a campaign in the valley of Mexico, which had, up to this period, been so much of a *terra incognita*, as to be associated in our minds with little else than Cortez and Montezuma.

General Worth's division—the first division of Regulars—was composed of two brigades, under colonels Garland and Clarke. The 2d and 3d regiments of artillery, and the 4th regiment of infantry, constituted the first brigade, and the 5th, 6th and 8th infantry constituted the second brigade. Duncan's light artillery, and Smith's light battalion of infantry, formed independent commands. Beside the general himself, our military family consisted of Captain Mackall, adjutant-general, Captain Pemberton, aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Wood, aid-de-camp, and myself. We had no such artiste for the kitchen as Monsieur Auguste; but our gallant caterer, Lieutenant Wood, always kept this necessary department supplied with the best native talent. An English soldier can never be brought to a "charge" unless he has a clean shirt on, and his stomach well filled; and as Brother Jonathan inherits many of the peculiarities of his English ancestor, it is seen that I do not attach too much importance to the culinary arrangements of our mess. I must not forget to mention here, our faithful mayordomos, Abram and Sandy, two intelligent slaves, one belonging to the general, and the other to Lieutenant Wood, who had accompanied their masters in all their campaigns; were frequently under fire; and felt, I verily believe, as much interest and pride in the success of our arms as their masters themselves. Abram might always be seen near the general, toward the close of an engagement, with a basket of refreshments on his arm, and looking with an anxious eye to ascertain whether his master had been hurt. These faithful fellows were at liberty, at all times, to depart without let or hindrance; but they remained faithful to the close of the war, and used frequently to compare exultingly their

own condition with that of the toiling peons—the free slaves—by whom they were surrounded. They preferred, they said, to be the servants of gentlemen, rather than consort with “poor white trash,” and especially with poor “Indian trash.”

Sometime before leaving Puebla, a coolness ensued between generals Scott and Worth, which I would not allude to here, were it not notorious to the whole country, and had it not been productive of consequences which form a part of the *res gestæ* of the campaign. I have detailed the very flattering manner in which General Worth had received his commander-in-chief, upon the arrival of the latter in Puebla, and the splendid banquet which he gave in his honor. The two generals had been friends for many years, and each had reflected honor on the other; their military fame was equally dear to the country, and hence it is important that the country should understand the relative positions occupied by each in the difficulties which ensued, and which were made notorious at the time by the pens of interested scribblers, who gave a false coloring to the whole transaction. I propose, for the present, but to glance at the origin of these difficulties, deferring to its proper time and place a brief sketch of their progress. General Worth, when he approached the city of Puebla, on the 15th of May (in that glorious march, in which, as has been described, with a handful of men, he separated himself from the main body of the army, and threw himself boldly into the heart of the enemy's country), halted for an hour or two, at a small village, five or six miles from the city, to receive a deputation of the municipality. The object of this visit of the municipality was to surrender the city, and at the same time to request that some guarantees might be given them—in order to quiet the apprehensions of the people—for the protection of religion, life, and property. There was no military force in Puebla to *demand* anything; and these guarantees, if granted at all, were to be granted *ex gratia*. General Worth did not hesitate a moment, but with sound judgment, and a policy of which the commander-in-chief had himself set him an example, at Vera Cruz (where the terms were equally within control), drew up a sort of transcript of the guarantees that had been given at that place, and having signed it, delivered it to the trembling

town council. I have not seen this paper, and cannot say, therefore, whether it bore the *form* of a capitulation or not; but this is entirely immaterial, as it is the thing, and not the form of the thing, that is to be regarded. To this proceeding (which was nothing more or less than the carrying out of General Scott's own policy of granting protection to religion, life, and property, and of conciliating, as far as practicable, the unarmed citizens of the country), the captious military objection was taken, that it was a capitulation. That it was productive of great benefits, no one can deny, as it gave a confidence and a sense of security to the Pueblans, which they would not otherwise have felt. It arrayed at once the better classes of citizens on the side of order, and enabled General Worth, with his handful of bold men, to govern in peace and quiet, a turbulent multitude of seventy thousand souls! This was surely better than to have entered, sword in hand, amid a general distrust and fear, which might have been productive of calamitous results, if not to the victors, to the vanquished. The great mass of the population was already disposed to look upon us as a horde of blood-thirsty savages, waiting but for an opportunity, to commit all sorts of excesses; and it was therefore as humane, as politic, to undeceive them beforehand, and to assure them that we were a civilized people, carrying on a civilized warfare, in which we recognized the validity of the rights of religion, life, and property. Any narrow, military reasoning based upon technicalities, which could be brought in opposition to this liberal and enlightened policy pursued by General Worth, was unworthy of the commander-in-chief of a great army. The reader is, no doubt, astonished to find so trivial a cause lying at the foundation of the difficulties which subsequently arose between these two great men. But trifling as this cause was, it was dwelt upon with harshness by the commander-in-chief; and his subordinate, and hitherto friend, was chided, in no measured terms, for his military mistake. General Worth, with the sensitiveness of a gallant soldier and a high-minded man, conscious of the rectitude of his motives, and of the soundness of his judgment, defended himself with earnestness, but in vain. His chief was unappeasable; and from that moment a schism was commenced which was never afterward healed.—

There is one lesson which it is extremely difficult for a military man to learn, and that is, the necessity of treating those who have been his subordinates, but who have risen to the same rank with himself, with becoming consideration and respect. Major-General Scott, seemingly, could not realize the fact that his former aide-de-camp, was now fifty-five years of age, and, like himself, a major-general in the army of the United States.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**MARCH** of the army upon the city of Mexico—General Twiggs the first to move—Is followed by General Quitman—March of General Worth—Encampment at Rio Prieto—San Martin—Pass the volcanoes of Puebla—Arrive at the Rio Frio—Summit-level of the mountains of Anahuac and first view of the valley of Mexico—Description of the valley—The ancient Tenochtitlan and the Aztecs—Its capture by Cortez—Bernal Diaz' account of some of the wonders of the ancient city—Spots rendered famous by the siege of Cortez, identified—Description of the march of Cortez, upon his first entry into the city of Mexico.

GENERAL SCOTT'S order of march, which was promulgated on the 6th of August, consisted in pushing forward his army by divisions, with an interval of twenty-four hours between them ; which was a very good order of march for Mexico, but would have subjected him, in almost any other country, to have had his divisions beaten in detail. But the general knew his enemy, and was justified, in a little disregard of tactics. The whole city of Puebla had been in a ferment for several days ; aids-de-camp and orderlies were dashing about in all directions through the streets, and the sound of busy preparation was heard in all the camps. General Twiggs, in command of the second division of regulars, was assigned the post of honor on this occasion. He marched on the morning of the 7th, a little after sunrise ; the whole population turning out to witness his departure. We had delayed so long in Puebla that the good people began to doubt our ability, or our courage, to march upon the "great city," at all. Their doubts were now set aside. The gallant old hero of Cerro Gordo drew up his veterans—some twenty-five hundred strong—in the grand plaza, in front of the government house ; and when all was ready, instead of addressing them, as a more windy general might have done, with much more effect, he took off his hat, and waving it round his head—his white locks giving him the appearance of some inspired old patriarch—shouted forth in the voice of a

**Stentor** : "Now, my lads, give them a Carro Gordo shout !" A simultaneous hurra ! rose on the morning air, from twenty-five hundred brazen throats, that shook the walls of the palace, and must have given a death-blow to the hopes of any Mexican patriots who were looking on. The cry was joined in and prolonged by the by-standers of other corps, and before its echoes had died away, the division, with its bands playing and banners flying, was in motion. It was, indeed, a thrilling spectacle to behold this vanguard of the American army thus moving on to the conquest of Mexico.

On the next day, the 8th, General Quitman, who commanded the 4th division—volunteers—marched. The battalion of marines, under Colonel Watson, had been assigned to this division, and was decidedly the finest looking corps the gallant Mississippian had under his command.

August 9th. This morning, General Worth moved. We were astir at an early hour, at "head-quarters," where the servants and orderlies, before daylight, had been running hither and thither, packing trunks, and stowing baggage-wagons ; and very soon the rumbling of artillery in the streets, and the heavy tramp of infantry, showed that our forces were marshaling in front of the general's quarters, to await his commands. We were in the saddle, after a hasty breakfast, at seven o'clock ; and although two divisions had preceded us, and the curiosity of the towns-people, to witness the march, might be supposed to be somewhat allayed, we could scarcely move for the dense crowd in the streets. The first division was the *Pueblan* division, *par excellence*, it having made the acquaintance of the inhabitants two weeks before the other divisions arrived, and touched their imaginations by the *insouciant* nap it had taken in the grand plaza ; the inhabitants had therefore turned out in great numbers to see it depart, and many were the apparently, cordial leave-takings between them and the soldiery. The morning was bright ; and as we passed out at the *garita de Mexico*, into the open plain, all nature seemed arrayed in the sweetest smiles of summer—the rains had now fertilized the earth—presenting to our enchanted view, green waving fields, and richly-carpeted meadows, over which were wafted on the morning air, the dewy fragrance of the young grass, and the

perfume of shrub, and flower. The roads were firm and dry—it had not rained for several days—and the unclouded crest of the Malinche promised us good weather for our first day's march.—We arrived at the *Rio Prieto*, about one o'clock, P. M., a distance of ten miles from Puebla, and encamped, according to the general programme, for the night. Malinche kept his promise, and sent us no rain; which was highly favorable to us, as many of the troops were without tents, and there were no quarters for them at the *rio*.

We breakfasted, the next morning, by candle-light, at five o'clock, and were in the saddle punctually at seven—the hour prescribed over night. The morning, unlike that of yesterday, was cool and autumn-like, the sky being overcast with dull, gray clouds. We arrived at *San Martin*, at two o'clock, P. M., a distance of ten or eleven miles farther, having halted frequently to rest the infantry. Although the distance was short, the march was an harassing one—the road being exceedingly dusty, and the sun toward noon having burst through the canopy of clouds which concealed him, and brought us scorching summer in exchange for dreary autumn. As we were now in a village of some size, in which centered several different roads, affording an enterprising enemy facilities for attack, it became necessary to pay some attention to military precautions. The light artillery was therefore placed in the plaza, with the light battalion of infantry quartered near, as a covering force, and the remaining regiments lodged in streets debouching upon the plaza. A drizzling rain set in, toward night, but everybody being snugly housed, it gave us no inconvenience.

August 11. Another cool, autumn-looking, cloudy morning. We were astir as usual before daylight; partook of a hasty breakfast, by candle-light, and were in the saddle at six, an hour earlier than yesterday; it being General Worth's intention to make a double march to-day, and encamp at *Rio Frio*. The march was much more agreeable than those of the two preceding days. The rain of last evening had laid the dust in the roads, without rendering them muddy, and we were not annoyed by the sun. Constant exclamations of delight arose from officers and men, as we wound around the base of *Istaccihuatl*, with its glittering canopy



of snow, and changed, from time to time, the shape of the volcano of Popocatepetl. At one point in our journey, the latter presented the figure of a truncated cone, displaying the mouth of the ancient crater, some three-fourths of a mile in diameter! What an infernal cauldron this must have been, in the days of the activity of this giant volcano of the Andes! We halted for an hour, at the *Puente Tezmulucan*, to rest, and water and refresh the troops. From this point, the march became exceedingly toilsome to the infantry, incumbered with their knapsacks and muskets; but they climbed the steep ascent with great spirit and energy—they were on the way to Mexico! We halted again, for half an hour, at a mountain rivulet, some five or six miles farther on, to water and refresh men and animals, and putting ourselves in motion for the last stage of our journey, reached the *Rio Frio* just before sunset.

A cold and drizzling rain had set in, but General Worth, instead of dismounting and making himself comfortable, leaving to subordinates the care of superintending the encampment, sat his horse for two long hours afterward, until every man and animal had been provided for. And this was his constant practice. He could never rest, himself, so long as anything remained to be done for his soldiers. There was but little shelter here for the troops, and many of them were without tents; but fortunately we found plenty of pine wood, ready cut to our hands; and the men having built themselves large camp-fires, rolled themselves in their blankets, and passed a tolerable night, despite the cold and the rain. We, of the staff, quartered ourselves on my old friend the German, whose acquaintance, the reader will recollect, Captain Kearney and myself had made some months before. He prepared an excellent supper for us, and brought forth from his cellar an extra bottle or two of old Rhenish. His young *Dutch* friend, Seymour, was equally well taken care of.

Just before reaching the *Rio Frio*, while winding up a steep ascent of the mountain side, we passed one of those numerous monuments of barbarity and murder to be met with everywhere in Mexico. It consisted of an inscription carved in the face of the rock, and commemorated the death of ten soldiers, who had been sent out by the government to clear the roads of banditti, but who, falling

in with a superior force of these villains, amounting to some thirty or forty, had all been put to death in a most barbarous manner! Several strong defiles were passed by us during this day's march—one of the strongest of which was the Puente Tezmolucan. There was no possible mode of passing this stream except by the bridge, and this, and the road, for some distance after leaving it, might have been so effectually commanded by a single piece of artillery well served, as to have held our whole division in check. The Rio Frio formed another strong pass; and Santa Anna had, at one time, halted here with a view to defend it, but afterward abandoned the idea. Some timber had been felled, and a breast-work partially constructed. It was a matter of constant surprise to us, that the enemy made no effort to arrest our march, or at least, to annoy us, in the numerous strongholds of the mountains we had passed.

August 12. We were astir at our usual hour, and found the morning air keen and frosty. The ground was covered with the first white frost we had seen, since the opening of the campaign. It was just the morning for a march of infantry; but we, who were on horseback, although we drew on our overcoats and serapes, suffered considerably, in our ride over the mountains. The division was in motion about seven o'clock; and as it wound up the steep and tortuous ascent from the *rio*, with its long files of infantry (whose bayonets glittered in the newly risen sun), its rumbling artillery, and white-tanted wagons, it presented a beautiful and picturesque spectacle; independently of any romance the imagination might throw around it, as a second army of conquest, winding its way over the same heights, from which had fluttered the pennons of Cortez. We were now crossing the Anahuac ridge of the Cordilleras, the most magnificent portion of this stupendous range of mountains, from Cape Horn to the frozen ocean of the north. Peaks of extinct volcanoes, of fantastic shapes, rose around us, presenting their bare and jagged sides to the morning sun, and the clouds as they swept by in their passage from one plain to the other—we were on the dividing ridge between the plains of Puebla and Mexico—enveloped us in occasional wreaths of mist and fog. We had ascended to the height of 10,400 feet, where there was but little other vegetation than the moss, and the

stunted fir, and whence we might look down upon the war of elements below us. The continuity of the ascent was broken by an occasional *plateau*, forming steps, as it were, in the mountains. We halted on these, from time to time, to breathe the wearied men and animals.

Some five miles after leaving the Rio Frio, we entered upon the *Llano Grande*, a narrow and tortuous *plateau* of about a mile in length, which forms the summit-level of the ridge. From a small knoll at the farther extremity of this *plateau*, we caught our first glimpse of the great valley of Mexico; and it was but a glimpse, as a dense cold fog enveloped all objects in its folds, and shut out from view everything but the general outline of the valley itself. We seemed to be looking upon an immense inland sea, surrounded by ranges of stupendous mountains, crested by snow and the clouds. We halted the column here for rest and refreshment, and to give all an opportunity of looking upon the "promised land." The fog lifted somewhat, as we commenced our descent, but still the *coup d'œil* of the valley disappointed us; not in its grandeur and extent, for these are unequaled, but from the descriptions of travelers, we had been led to suppose, that we should be able to take in all the details of the panorama at our first view; which is not the case. A range of hills, running nearly across the valley, obstructs the view of all the north-eastern portion of it, including the city itself; and from no one point of the descent, can any view be obtained which will do justice to this most magnificent of the world's landscapes. Those travelers, therefore, who have pretended to sketch it from the heights of the dividing ridge of Anahuac, have confounded their after inspection with their first view of it.

From the summit-level to the *Venta de Cordova*—hotel of Cordova—near the base of the mountain, the distance is about five miles. We soon caught sight of this, and of the lake and town of *Chalco*, beyond and to the left, and of the encampments of generals Twiggs and Quitman, on and near the main road—their white tents looking like mere specs in the great valley. The latter was encamped at a hacienda called *Buena Vista*, near the point where the road branches off for Chalco; and the former at *Ayotla*, a village a league farther on, where General Scott, who

had accompanied General Twiggs, had established his headquarters. The sight of these camps caused our hearts to beat quick with emotion. There lay our countrymen, numbering in all but about four thousand men, in the presence of all the Mexican hosts, numbering twenty-five thousand! who had yet not dared to attack and destroy them, as they might easily have done, before General Worth or General Pillow, bringing up the rear divisions, could have come to the rescue. If General Santa Anna had been a Napoleon, the history of this campaign might have worn a very different aspect. As we approached, the glorious stripes and stars became visible, floating proudly and lazily in the evening breeze, over the camps of the invader, presenting the mind with much food for curious speculation. The Mexican tri-color, which had never before beheld an enemy in the great valley, seemed to float, equally as proudly, from the heights of the frowning *Peñon*, a short distance beyond. Passing through the camp of General Quitman, and halting, for a moment, for hurried inquiry and congratulation, we diverged to the left, for Chalco, where we intended to encamp, agreeably to the orders of the general-in-chief. Passing over a sort of causeway, flanked on either hand by meadows and marshes, we reached our quarters just about sunset, after a long and weary march of twenty miles over a steep mountain-range.

The usual evening rains—we had commenced our campaign in the midst of the rainy season—set in soon after we entered the town; and as we were in a hurry to shelter the troops from the weather, and the good citizens of Chalco were rather dilatory with their keys, we were obliged to resort, *ex necessitate*, to what our enemies afterward facetiously called, the *Llave Grande Americana*; or great North American Key, to wit, a pioneer's ax. A blow or two with this instrument on the barred and bolted door, the key of which had been *lost* or *misaid*, always brought the missing key in double quick time, with the deprecating exclamation of the landlord, of "*espera un momento, señores, que se abrirá la puerta muy pronto*"—wait a moment, if you please, gentlemen, we will open the door for you directly! We threw out the usual pickets, and having taken the other necessary precautions against surprise, slept (not without many images crowding on the brain)

our first sleep in the valley of Mexico; where, alas! many a brave fellow, from among us, now sleeps his last sleep. The clouds, as usual, all dispersed during the night, and the village of Chalco, seeming to be seated at the very base of Popocatepetl, smiled the next morning in the rays of a tropical sun, and in an atmosphere of peculiar and startling transparency. The snowy crags of the mountains were all brought forth into bold relief, and the distant windings of the lakes, whose shores were dotted with villages, were seen as distinctly as though they had been but a few miles away. In the early morning I wandered down to the *embarcadero*—the landing-place—(of course, the reader knows that the village of Chalco is situated on the borders of the lake of the same name) and witnessed, for the first time, the spectacle of the Indians paddling about in their canoes, and bringing their rich freights of fruits and flowers to the market. These simple denizens of the lagoons and marshes, seemed to be scarcely aware of what was going on, and to be in nowise interested in the result. Their canoes were very small, and contained generally but a single person—most frequently a woman—and beside being deeply laden with products for the market, were fancifully decorated with flowers; among which predominated the many-colored and brilliant chrysanthemum. One might have fancied a “lady of the lake” in each of these tiny barks, but for the expressionless face, tawny skin, and square, squat figure of the occupant, which gave a death-blow to all sentiment.

In the afternoon of this day, General Pillow arrived, in command of the rear division, and passing through Chalco, took up his quarters at a hacienda about a mile and a half beyond, encamping his troops in the adjacent plains. We thus have the whole army, consisting of four divisions, encamped in the valley of Mexico. Before entering upon a description of the campaign, I must give the reader a short sketch of the city and valley of Mexico; both of which belong now, as much to the fame of America, as to that of Spain. The reader will, of course, not only be anxious to understand the topography of the country, as it influenced the movements of the army, but as it is connected with the first great conquest, which must ever, in the eye of the historian, go linked, hand in hand, with the second.

The valley of Mexico is situated in the center of the great Cordillera of Anahuac, on a *plateau* of porphyritic and basaltic mountains, extending from N. N. W. to S. S. E. It is of oval shape, and about forty-six miles long, by thirty-two miles broad. Its superficies, therefore, is 1472 square miles; of which about 140 square miles are occupied by the lakes and adjacent marshes.—The circumference of the valley, reckoning from the crests of the surrounding mountains, is about 180 miles. Looking down upon this basin from any of the surrounding heights, the circumvallation of mountains appears to be complete, without outlet in any direction. It thus presents the idea—when seen under favorable circumstances, in all its gorgeous beauty—of a sort of terrestrial paradise, from which the rest of the world has been carefully excluded by ramparts of impassable mountains; some of whose peaks are crowned with snow, and appear to watch over the beautiful valley like jealous sentinels. The city of *Tenochtitlan*, or Mexico, which sits like a queen upon her throne, in the center of this beautiful valley, surrounded by lakes and picturesque villages, was originally built by the Aztecs, a race of the aborigines of our continent, whose remote history is but little known. Previous to constructing this magnificent city, they had settled, alternately, in many parts of the valley, and changed from place to place, to better their condition, or escape the persecution of their enemies. According to their chronicles—when discovered, they kept these in hieroglyphical characters, more or less resembling those of the Egyptians—they emigrated from Aztlan, the precise location of which is not known, in the year 1160, and did not reach the valley of Mexico, until after a sort of Mosaic wandering in the wilderness of fifty-six years. They first made their appearance in the valley of Toluca, a beautiful region some thirty miles west of Mexico, amid the mountains. Soon afterward we find them in the mountains of *Tepeyacac*, near the modern village of *Guadalupe Hidalgo*, the name of which is familiar to the American reader, from its having been the place where our treaty of peace was negotiated. Thence they emigrated to *Chapultepec*, the same which was stormed by our forces, and then, a rocky island in the lakes; whence they were again driven by their enemies, the *Tal-tocans*. We next find them settled on a small group of islands,

near the southern shores of Lake *Texcoco*. Here, hemmed in by their enemies on all sides, and not daring to venture from their island-homes, they spent half a century, in the most abject poverty, being obliged to draw their sustenance chiefly from the waters, and to feed on aquatic plants and insects. But they were not safe even here. The *Texcocans* made fierce war upon them, and reducing them to slavery, compelled them to remove to the main land. From this servitude they were released, some years afterward, in consideration of important services rendered their masters, in their wars with the neighboring tribes. They then established themselves in *Mexicalcingo*—a small town which still exists, some five or six miles south-east of Mexico, and which the enemy had converted into a fortification upon our arrival in the valley. These people had preserved a tradition in all their wanderings, to the effect that they were to establish their final resting-place, and build themselves a city, on the spot where they should see an eagle perched on a prickly pear—which in this country becomes a tree—strangling a serpent in its claws. This spectacle they now witnessed on one of a small cluster of islands, situated E. N. E. of Chapultepec, and near the western shores of Lake *Texcoco*. Soon after witnessing the happy omen, they removed to the sacred spot, and in the year 1325, or two centuries before its conquest by Cortez, they laid the foundations of the great city of Mexico.

We can scarcely believe that in 1519, when Cortez arrived at Vera Cruz, this wandering tribe of savages had built themselves an imperial city, and established an empire, that not only included the whole valley of Mexico, but extended to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific ocean! But such is the fact. Another contrast is still more startling. From a tribe of naked savages, groping among the small mud islands they inhabited, for their daily food, they had become a comparatively civilized people; surrounded not only by the comforts, but by the luxuries and refinements of life; cultivating the arts and sciences, and perpetuating their history by written records. In reading the description, by Cortez, of this famous city, great allowance must unquestionably be made for the high state of excitement under which he wrote. He saw everything *couleur de rose*, and wrote, as all his countrymen of that day did, in a tone of enthusiastic exaggeration. For the same

reasons that Columbus saw spices in every shrub, and gold in everything that glittered, in his earlier voyages to the new world, Cortez beheld cities and palaces, and hosts of armed warriors, in every place he visited. Much of the over-wrought imagery of his descriptions is due, no doubt, to the warmth of his imagination, producing in his mind an honest illusion; but much is also due to the very natural desire of magnifying his prowess, and the importance of his services to the crown, by exaggerating the civilization and numbers of his enemies. In one of his letters to Charles V, he gave the following description of the ancient city and lakes. After speaking of the conformation of the valley, pretty much as I have already described it, he proceeds—"In one of these lakes there is fresh water, and in the other salt—the latter being the larger. They are partially divided by a group of small conical hills, of considerable height, that run nearly across the valley—[the same the reader has seen in his descent with me, from the ridge of Anahuac]—and reducing the waters in the point where they approach the opposite heights, to a narrow strait. The communication between these lakes, and the various cities and towns on their borders, is carried on in canoes, without there being any necessity to pass by land. As this great salt-lake ebbs and flows like the sea, its waters during the flood-tide, run into the fresh-water lake, and when the tide ebbs, the waters of the latter flow into the former. [This was a mistake of Cortez; he evidently mistook the effect of the winds on some two or three occasions, for tides, as the closest subsequent investigations have shown, that there is nothing like an ebb and flow of the tide in these lakes—their surfaces being too small to be operated upon by the causes (the attraction, sometimes joint, and sometimes opposite, of the sun and moon) which produce these phenomena in the sea.] This great city of Tenochtitlan is founded in the salt lake, and from the main land to the body of the city, by whatever route you choose to enter it, is two leagues. It has four causeways [it had but three—Cortez mistook the causeway leading from Chapultepec into the city, on which the aqueduct was constructed, but which did not touch the main land, for one], made to hand, each of the width of two horsemen's lances. It is as large as *Seville* and *Cordova*. Its principal streets are wide and straight,



and the other streets are, half of them land, and half of them water—canoes passing through the latter. All the streets are cut, from space to space, so as to allow the water to pass freely from one to the other; and over all of these apertures, some of which are very wide, are thrown bridges, strong and of good workmanship. Many of these bridges are so wide, that ten horsemen abreast might pass over them. The city has a great many public squares, where there are markets continually held, and where there is much trafficking in buying and selling. It has another great square, twice as large as that of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where sixty thousand people assemble to buy and sell, and where there are collected all the goods and merchandises of these lands, as well of provisions, as of jewels of gold and silver, of lead, brass, copper, precious stones, bones, shells, conchs and feathers. A precious stone is sometimes sold dressed, and sometimes in its rude state. There are also *adobes*, bricks and timber, dressed and undressed. There is a street where they sell all kinds of birds, such as the domestic hen, partridges, quails, doves, pigeons, parrots, hawks, eagles, etc.; and of the birds of prey, they sell the skins dressed, with the feathers, head and claws on. They sell also, rabbits, hares, venison, and a kind of small dog which they castrate, and fatten to eat. There are apothecaries' shops, where they sell medicines, as well those which are taken internally, as ointments and plasters. There are barbers' shops, where they lather and shave you with obsidian razors. There are eating-houses, where you eat and drink for a price. There are men like those we call *Ganapanes*, in Spain, who carry burthens. There are quantities of wood and charcoal, and earthen brasiers, and many kinds of mats which they use as beds, and others of a fair quality, which they use to sit on, in their halls and chambers. There are all manner of vegetables, particularly onions and garlic, tomatoes, beans, peas, etc. There are fruits of various kinds, among which are cherries and plums like those of Spain. They sell honey, beeswax, and a sirup extracted from the corn-stalk, which is as good as that of the sugar-cane; a sirup made of the maguey plant, of which also, they make sugar and wine. There are for sale many kinds of cotton threads, of all colors, and the shops where they are sold are like the silk stores of Grenada, only

much more abundantly supplied. They sell painters' colors, in as great a variety as we have in Spain, and as well combined and mixed. They sell deer-skins, tanned and untanned, white and dyed of different colors. They sell great quantities of earthenware, much of it very good; they sell vases and jars, large and small tiles, and bowls, all painted and glazed. They sell corn in grain, and in bread. Finally, in the said markets, they sell everything which is to be found in all this country—each description of merchandise being found in its particular street, without interfering with the rest. In this there is much order observed, and beside, they sell everything by tale and measure; but as yet I have seen nothing sold by weight. There is, in this grand plaza, a hall of justice, where there are always seated some ten or a dozen persons, who are justices, and who decide upon all cases and things, occurring in the said markets, and punish the delinquents. There are, in the said plaza, other persons who are continually going round among the people, observing what is sold, and the measures that are used, as whether they are true or false, etc." If we add to the above description, that of Bernal Diaz, who, as the reader has been informed, was one of Cortez's captains, and who has left us a graphic account of the conquest, written from memory, many years afterward, when like the old soldier in Goldsmith, he

"Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,  
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won,"

we shall have a pretty good idea of the ancient city, or at least as it appeared to the excited imaginations of the conquerors. The old chronicler, after describing the passage of the small army—four hundred and fifty—over the Anahuac ridge, by the old and now unfrequented road between Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl—the same by which Mr. Rogers had reached Puebla, from Mexico—in which they encountered a snow-storm, and suffered intensely from the cold, goes on, in his quaint language to say:—"The next day we commenced to travel, and about the hour of late mass, arrived at a small town called *Talmalanco* [on the slope of the mountains, as you descend into the valley], where they received us, and gave us something to eat; and as the news of our arrival had preceded us, the people came to see us from *Chalca*, *Mecumeca*, and *Ayocingo*, where were a number of canoes, this

being one of the ports for them. They, all together, brought us a present of gold and two *cargas* [mule loads] of blankets, and eight Indians. The gold was worth \$150; and they said, *Malinche!* [this was the name they gave Cortez], receive these presents, which we bring you, and regard us hereafter as your friends. Cortez received them with great love, and offered to help them in all their necessities; and when he saw us all together, he said to the Father of Mercy [Father Olmedo, the worthy chaplain of the expedition], that he ought to enlighten them, on matters touching our holy faith, and admonish them to abandon their idols; which the good father did, saying to them, all those things which we were accustomed to say in the towns, through which we passed. To all of which they answered, that it was well said, and that they would think of it hereafter. We also gave them to understand the great power of our lord the emperor, and that we came among them to punish wrongs and redress grievances. And when they heard this, they made to us secretly (so that the ambassadors of Montezuma, who were in our company, should not hear them) many complaints of Montezuma—of the heavy taxes he imposed on them; of the robberies that were committed on them, by his orders; of the forcible abduction of their women and children, and how he made them carry to the great city, in their canoes, pine wood from the mountains, stone, lumber, corn, etc. [We passed through *Ayocingo*, the place from which these Indians came, on our march, around lake *Chalco*, and found it, after the lapse of more than three hundred years, precisely as the old chronicler describes it. There were piles of “pine wood from the mountains,” which the Indians were carrying, “to the great city in their canoes;” and (to judge by their sbject appearance) although the Montezuma of Cortez had passed away, another Montezuma had arisen to tax and oppress them, as sorely.] Cortez consoled them with amorous words, which he knew so well how to use, through *Doña Marina*, and told them to bear their burthens patiently for awhile, as he would soon relieve them from so grievous a tyranny.

\* \* \* \* \*

“We were about to continue our journey, when there appeared four ambassadors, from among the principal Mexicans, sent by

Montezuma, and they brought with them a present of gold and blankets, and after having paid their respects according to their custom, they said: '*Malinche!* this present is sent to you, by our great lord Montezuma, who says he is very sorry for the trouble you have taken, to come from such distant lands to see him; and that he has said to you before, that he will give you plenty of gold, and silver, and jewels, as tribute for your emperor, and for yourself and the rest of the *Teules* [gods] you bring with you, and that you should not come to the city of Mexico. He now again begs of you, as a favor, that you will not proceed any farther, but will return whence you came; and he says he will send to the port a great quantity of gold and silver, and rich stones for your king; and as for yourselves, he will give you four *cargas* of gold, and each one of your brethren one *carga*. He excuses you from entering the city of Mexico, because all his vassals are armed for the purpose of keeping you out.' And beside this, they told us that the road was very narrow, and that they had no provisions wherewith to supply us; and they urged many other objections why we should not proceed any farther. And Cortez, with much love, embraced the ambassadors, although he was sorry to receive the message they brought, and took their presents, the value of which I have now forgotten. As far as I saw, Montezuma always sent more or less gold, whenever he sent us messengers, as I have before said. But to return to our relation. Cortez answered them, that 'he was surprised that Montezuma, having professed himself so great a friend, and being so great a lord, should change his mind so often. At one time he says one thing, and at another time, another; that in regard to what he now says, he will give the gold to the emperor, which he has sent him, and as for ourselves, he thanks him very much for what he has sent us, and hopes to repay him in good works, at some future time[!]; and asks him whether he would think it well for us, now that we are so near the city, to turn back without doing what our master had commanded us? and if he, Montezuma, had sent ambassadors to any great lord, as he is, himself, and they should return, after having gone so near their journey's end, without delivering the message he had sent, what he would do with them when they came back? That in the same manner would our emperor act; and that we were

determined to enter the city by some means or other ; and that, henceforth, it would be unnecessary for him to send him any more excuses on that subject, as he was determined to see him, himself, and deliver, in person, the messages with which he had been charged. And when he should have done this, if he, Montezuma, should not think well of his farther stay in the city, he would return as he came ; and in regard to provisions, he said we were men of few necessities, and few provisions would suffice.'—He then dispatched the messengers, and we continued our journey toward Mexico.

“ The people of *Guazocingo* [*Ayocingo*] and Chalco had told us that Montezuma had consulted his chief priests and idols, as to our entering Mexico, and that they had all advised him to permit us to enter, as then he could the more easily put us to death. Now, as we were men, and afraid of death, we could not help dwelling on these things ; and as the country was very thickly inhabited, we made short marches, recommending ourselves, all the while, to our blessed Saviour, and the Holy Virgin, and discouraging of the manner in which we were to enter. We consoled ourselves by reflecting, that as our Lord Jesus Christ had protected us thus far, through all our past dangers, he would continue to watch over us, in Mexico.

“ We slept this night, at a small town called *Iztapalatego*, situated at the base of a range of hills [in the valley], half of the houses of which were in the water, and half on the land. Here we had a good supper. But let us leave this, and return to Montezuma, who, as soon as his messengers returned, and he had received the answer of Cortez, sent out his nephew *Guatimosin* [afterward so distinguished as his uncle's successor] with great pomp to receive him, and welcome him to the city. As we had out pickets and videttes, according to our custom ; one of these came running in, to inform us, that a great number of peaceable Mexicans, all richly dressed, were on the way to our camp. This was early in the morning, just as we were about to set out, but Cortez ordered us to remain where we were, until he could see what all this meant. Almost at the same moment, four chiefs arrived, who paid great reverence to Cortez, and informed him, that *Guatimosin*, the great lord of *Tescoco*, and nephew of Montezuma, was

on his way to see him. It was not long before he arrived, coming in much more state than we had before seen, as he was borne in a kind of close chair, richly carved, and adorned with green feathers, and gold and precious stones. [Green was the royal color of Mexico, and hence the green stripe worn in the present Mexican flag.] This chair was borne on the shoulders of eight of the principal lords of the surrounding towns. When they had arrived near to where Cortez was, these assisted their chief to descend from the chair, and swept the ground before him, picking even the straws out of his way. And when they arrived in the presence of our captain, they paid him great respect, and Guatimozin said to him: '*Malinche!* these gentlemen and I come to offer you everything you may stand in need of, you and your companions, and to lodge you comfortably in our city, this being the command of our lord Montezuma.' When our captain and all of us saw so much parade and majesty, we said to one another, if this cacique is so much honored, what are we to expect of the great Montezuma, himself? When Guatimozin had finished speaking, Cortez embraced him, bestowing many caresses on him, and his associates, making him a present of three stones, called *margaritas*—pearls—very brilliant; and to the other chiefs he gave blue beads, and said that he thanked them very much for their kindness; and as for Montezuma, he should never be able, he said, to repay him for so many services. The conversation ended, we immediately set out, and as these caciques had brought a great many attendants with them, and as all the people turned out from the adjacent villages to see us, the road was filled with them.

"The next day we reached *Iztapalapan*, near the great causeway. From this point, we saw a great many cities and villages, situated in the midst of the lakes, as well as on dry land, and the causeway led straight to the city, being a dead level all the way. [This causeway, by which Cortez first entered Mexico, is that at present leading from the city to the great *Acapulco* road, passing through the village of San Augustin, then known as *Tlalpam*.—On it, the battle of Churubusco was fought. During the siege of the city, by Cortez, he operated in person—in conjunction with Cristobal de Olid—on this causeway; and General Worth

encamped on the night after the battle of Churubusco, at a place now called *Ladrillera*, but which was formerly known as *Xoloc*, the head-quarters of Cortez, after he had made some progress in the siege. The reader thus perceives how our movements, at every step in the great valley, recalled to our minds the romantic history of Cortez and his exploits—which must be my apology for carrying him so much in detail over the classic ground.] We were truly astonished at all these things, and said, one to another: ‘This looks like a scene of enchantment, such as we read of in *Amadis* [the reader will recollect this famous romance of chivalry, which, with others, gave rise to the burlesque criticism of *Don Quixote*], with its towers, and temples, and edifices, all of stone, and in the midst of the waters.’ Indeed some of the soldiers were so much surprised that they were half inclined to believe it all a dream. Nor is it to be wondered at, that I write in this strain, since such sights as we saw, on that occasion, were not only never seen before, but scarcely dreamed of.

“As we approached *Iztapalapan*, we were astonished at the magnificence of the chiefs who came out to meet us, and among whom, were the lords of *Coadlavaca* and *Coyocan*, they both being relatives of Montezuma. And then the palaces they lodged us in were magnificently built of stone and lime, and cedar and other odoriferous woods, with large court-yards and squares, all covered with awnings of cotton cloth. After we had seen all these things, we went into the flower and vegetable gardens, and walked through them, never getting tired of viewing the great variety of odoriferous trees and shrubs, and pots filled with flowers, and of fruit-trees and rose bushes, and in the midst of all, a fountain. But the greatest sight still, was to see the canoes enter the garden, through a low gateway, without the necessity of the passengers getting out upon the land. The whole was surrounded by a wall, formed of many kinds of stones, fancifully painted. There were many water-fowl, also, in the pond. I say again, that I looked upon it all with wonder, and I do not believe that there ever were such lands as these discovered before, as it must be recollected that in those days, we had not yet heard of Peru. But I must proceed with my story, and relate how the caciques of this city brought Cortez a present of gold, amounting to two thousand

dollars and more ; and for which, Cortez gave them many thanks, and treated them with much affection, and discoursed with them, through our interpreters, on the things concerning our holy faith, and the great power of our lord, the emperor. But as there were a great many other things said, I will not here relate them. Truly, this was a great town, in those days, one-half of the houses being in the water, and the other half on the land. Now all this is changed, and they sow seed where formerly was the lake. If I had not seen it, I could not believe that the lake, which we saw so full of water, had been converted into corn-fields. [If the doughty old captain could look down, now, upon Iztapalapan, he would be pained to perceive that the beautiful picture of it which he has left us, is no longer true to the original. Instead of containing ten thousand inhabitants, as it did in his day, and being adorned with palaces and flower-gardens, it has dwindled to a small village, of a few hundred souls, who live in unsightly huts. It is situated near Mexicalcingo, and is in the midst of an extensive meadow, with not a drop of water within many miles of it.] But let us leave this subject, and proceed to relate how Montezuma received us all in the great city of Mexico. The next morning, we left Iztapalapan, accompanied by a great crowd, among which were the caciques I have already mentioned. We went forward on the causeway, which is about eight yards wide, and goes direct to the city of Mexico, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left. Although it was so wide, it was filled with people, some going in, and some coming out to see us. Beside which, all the temples and houses by the way-side were filled, and canoes crowded with them, surrounded the causeway. Nor was it to be wondered at, as they never before had seen horses or men like ourselves. As for our part, we knew not what to say, upon witnessing such extraordinary sights—great cities on the land and in the water, the lake covered with canoes, and numerous bridges over the sluices in the causeway, and in front of us the great city of Mexico, while we amounted to but four hundred and fifty soldiers ; recollecting all the while the conversations we had had with our friends of Guaxocingo and Chalco, and the advice they had given us to be on our guard, to prevent Montezuma from murdering us, when we should get into the city. Let the reader ponder well on



these things, and then say whether in all the universe, there has ever been such daring as ours !

"But to return—let us proceed on the causeway. We now arrived to where it was joined by another causeway coming from Coyocan, which is another city where there were temples and palaces, and fine houses [Coyocan is a village—dwindled to insignificance—which still exists, situated between Ohurubusco and Contreras. After the battle at the latter place, the enemy retreated and was pursued by our troops, through this place, to Churubusco, where another and a greater battle was fought, on the same day. It was at Coyocan that Cortez established his first head-quarters, when he undertook the siege of the city of Mexico. In the interval between the battle of Churubusco, and that of Molino del Rey, the 3d volunteer division, under General Pillow, was quartered in this village]. Many caciques, richly dressed with blankets on them, and with their dresses differently decorated from the others, here joined us, and filled up the causeway—being sent by the great Montezuma to receive us. And when they had reached Cortez, they said we were welcome, and in token of peace, touched the ground with their hands, and then kissed their hands. We were now detained some time, and Guatimozin, the lord of Tezcoco, the lord of Iztapalapan, the lord of Tacuba, and the lord of Coyocan went forward to meet Montezuma, who advanced in a rich sedan chair, accompanied by other great lords and caciques, all surrounded by their vassals. [The village of *Tacuba* is situated at the extremity of the causeway of *San Cosmé*, over which General Worth fought his way into the city, on the 13th September. It was the causeway of *San Cosmé* on which *Pedro de Alvarado* operated during the great siege, establishing his head-quarters at Tacuba. Bernal Diaz, whom I am quoting, belonged to Alvarado's division. It was over this causeway, also, that the celebrated flight of Cortez, on the *Noche Triste*, took place.] When we had approached very near the city, where there was a number of small towers, Montezuma descended from his sedan, and came forward, supported by his lords, under a rich canopy decorated with green feathers, precious stones, and gold and silver embroidery, and ornaments. He was most sumptuously attired, according to the custom of the country. He wore a sort

of sandals on his feet, the soles of which were of gold, and the upper parts adorned with precious stones, and the four lords who supported him by the arms, were also most richly dressed after their fashion; which dresses they must have put on, on the road, when they went forward to meet Montezuma, as they were not the same they had on when they left us. Other grand caciques accompanied these lords, bearing canopies over their heads, and many others preceded Montezuma, sweeping the ground before him, and laying down blankets for him to tread upon. None of these lords dared look him in the face, but modestly kept their eyes fixed on the ground, except the four kinsmen who had him by the arms. When Cortez saw him approach, he alighted from his horse, and they mutually paid great respect to each other—Montezuma bidding Cortez welcome, and Cortez, through Doña Marina, saying something civil in return. Cortez then took off a collar from his neck, and placed it around that of Montezuma, making an effort to embrace him at the same time, which his attendants perceiving, prevented, lest the dignity of the great king should be offended. Cortez then said, that his heart was at length rejoiced at his beholding so great a prince, and that he regarded it as a great favor, his coming out to meet him in person. Montezuma, in reply, paid some other compliments, and directed his two nephews who had him by the arm—the lords of Texcoco and Coyocan—to go with us, and see us quartered, when with his other two relatives—the lords of Coadlavaca and Tacuba—he returned to the city. Many of the chiefs, and other persons accompanied him, relieving us, somewhat, of the pressure of the crowd, and enabling us to pass through the streets of the city with greater ease. But who will be able to tell the number of men, women and children who came out on the house-tops, in the streets, in doorways and canoes, near the causeway, to see us? It is singular that at this moment, while I am writing, all these things rise up as vividly before me as if they had happened yesterday; and considering that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us grace and strength to enter such a city, and has since protected me from so many dangers, as will hereafter appear, I return him many thanks therefor.

“But let us return to our entry into the city of Mexico, and

relate how they lodged us in some grand houses, where there were apartments for us all; which houses had formerly belonged to *Azayaca*, the father of Montezuma. [These houses formerly stood on one side of the great Plaza, north-westward of the present *Calle de Plateros*. Their site is now occupied by a row of elegant houses, known as the *Monte Leon* buildings.] In these houses there were large halls and drawing rooms, all richly tapestried from the ceiling to the ground, and for our captain and each one of us, mats for beds with hangings above them—this being the only kind of bed they provide for any one, however great a lord he may be. And when we had entered into the great court, Montezuma, who was awaiting us, took Cortez, and conducting him to his apartments, which were furnished with great luxury, according to their custom, placed a collar of shrimps of gold, of curious workmanship, around his neck. And when he had placed it, Cortez gave him many thanks. Montezuma then said, *Malinche!* you and your companions are in your own house, I will leave you to your rest. He then retired to his own palace, which was close by, and we divided the apartments among us, according to companies; placing the artillery in a commanding position, and making other arrangements for being on the alert. We then dined sumptuously. This, our entrance into the great city of Mexico, was on the 8th day of November, 1519."

## CHAPTER XVII.

CONTINUATION of the description of the ancient Tenochtitlan—Comparison of the topography of the ancient, with that of the modern city—Gradual drying up of the lakes—The causeways—The enemy's position and plan of defense—The Peñon and Mexicalcingo reconnoitered by the engineers, and General Scott's plan of attack—The reconnoissance of Chalco by General Worth, and its consequences—Singular scenery of the lake—Picturesque towns on its borders—Semi-barbarism of the inhabitants—General Worth's letter to General Scott recommending the route by lake Chalco—Colonel Duncan's letter to the "Pittsburgh Post"—General Scott's order No. 349—Correspondence between generals Scott and Worth—Arrest of the latter by the former, etc.—Secretary Marcy's letter.

AFTER Cortez and his companions had been several days in their new domicil, during which frequent visits had been exchanged between them and Montezuma, they sallied forth to see the city. They first visited the grand plaza of *Tlaltelolco*, which has already been described in the extract I have given from Cortez's letter. The description of Bernal Diaz corresponds with that of his great captain, in all essentials, but is far more minute and diffuse. From the Plaza Tlaltelolco, they proceeded to the great Idol Temple, towering far above the surrounding houses. This temple occupied the site of the present cathedral, in the grand plaza of Mexico (see plate). Let us ascend to the top of it with the old chronicler, and take thence a bird's eye view of the ancient city. "And then we left the grand plaza Tlaltelolco without staying to see more of it, and went to the court and inclosure, where was situated the grand *Cu* [Idol Temple]. Before reaching this, we passed through a series of *patios*, or courts, all of which together, were larger than the square of *Salamanca*, and were surrounded by two walls of stone and lime. The large square, in which the temple itself was situated, was paved with smooth white tiles, and those parts, that were not paved in this manner, were covered with a kind of brown cement; the whole

swept so clean that not even a straw was to be seen. And when we arrived at the *Cu*, and before we had ascended any of the steps, the great Montezuma, who was on the top of it offering up sacrifices, sent six priests and two lords to accompany our captain, Cortez, up. The steps were one hundred and fourteen in number, and as our captain, Cortez, began to ascend, these personages took him by the arms, as if to assist him, as they had been in the habit of assisting their master, Montezuma; but Cortez would not permit them to approach him. And when we had reached a sort of platform, on the top of the building, we beheld a great stone on which they placed their victims to sacrifice them [now shown, among other antiquities, in the museum of Mexico], and a great figure as of a dragon, and many other figures of hideous aspect; and we could see, that there had been much blood shed on that same day. When we arrived, the great Montezuma came forth from one of the chapels, and with him two priests, and saluting Cortez with much respect, he said, 'you must be tired, *Malinche!* after ascending our great temple;' whereupon, Cortez replied to him, through the interpreter, that 'neither he, nor any of his companions were ever tired by anything.' Montezuma then took him by the hand, and requested him to look forth upon his great city, and the other cities and towns that surrounded it, as well in the water as on the land, and said to him, if he had not seen his grand plaza Tlatelolco, he would have a fine view of it from this place. And so we took a review of everything, for that *accursed temple was so high*, that it commanded a fine prospect of all the country around. We saw the three causeways, that led into the city—that of Iztapalapan, by which we had entered, that of Tacuba, by which we fled from the city on the *Noche Triste*, eight months afterward, and that of Tapeyac [Guadalupe Hidalgo]. And we saw the fresh water brought in aqueducts from Chapultepec, for the supply of the city [Mexico was situated in the salt lake of Tezcoco], and the numerous bridges over the cuts in the causeways, through which the water passed from one part to the other of the lake. A great multitude of canoes, some coming to and some going from the city, all laden with the products of the surrounding country, covered the lake. And we saw that they passed from house to

house in the great city, as well as in the other cities of the lakes, by means of drawbridges and canoes. And we saw in these cities numerous temples and adoratories, built after the manner of fortifications, and all neatly whitewashed; and flat-roof houses, and other small temples and adoratories, looking like so many fortifications, on the causeways. And after we had well viewed and considered all this, we turned toward the great plaza, which we could see filled-with a multitude of people, some buying and others selling; and such were the bustle and hum of human voices, that we could hear them more than a league off. Among us there were soldiers who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, and through Italy and Rome, and they said that this plaza surpassed all they had seen, in its size, the multitude of its people, and the good order and arrangement of everything.

"But let us return to our captain, who said to Father Olmedo, 'it appears to me, father, that this would be a good time to jog Montezuma, about his permitting us to build our church here;' but the good father replied, that although it would be well, if we could obtain permission, he thought it better not to mention it at present, as Montezuma did not appear to be in the humor of granting it just now."

I have thus summoned Cortez, and his faithful old follower, to give the reader a *coup d'œil* of the city of Mexico, and the surrounding topography, as they existed in their day. Let us now briefly glance at the changes three hundred and thirty years have wrought in the pictures they have presented. The villages of Iztapalapan, Coyocan, Tacubaya, Tacuba, and Tepeyac extending from a point south-east of the city, to one north of it, were all on the margin of lake Tezcoco, in 1520, and there was an uninterrupted water communication between them and the city, and from one to the other, through the causeways. The lake has now, not only dried up between these and the city, but has receded a league beyond, thus leaving the city on dry land, and no longer in the midst of the lake, as formerly. The modern city occupies precisely the same position that the old one did, though it is a good deal diminished in size. The same causeways—now merely roads raised somewhat above the surrounding meadows, and marshy land—enter it at the same points—there having been two others

added; the streets run in the same direction, and the four original wards—four others having been formed out of them—bear the same names. The great plaza of Tlaltelolco, adjacent to the causeway of Tacuba, or San Cosmé, is now a heap of ruins, and forms a suburb of the city, inhabited by the poorer classes of the population, who live in miserable huts, constructed partly of the ancient ruins, and partly of *adobes*. The sluice through this causeway, over which, when the bridge was destroyed, Alvarado is said to have made his famous leap *on the noche triste*, has long since been filled up, and even the knowledge of its precise locality lost. A church now stands near the site, so far as the latter can be identified.

There are five lakes in the valley, Tezcoco, in which the city formerly stood, Xochimilco, Chalco, San Cristobal, and Zumpango. These lakes receive all the waters from the surrounding Cordilleras, and have no natural outlets; notwithstanding which, we have seen from the testimony of Bernal Diaz, when speaking of Iztapalapan, that they had begun to recede even in the days of Cortez. We have other proofs of this, too, in the Indian chronicles of the time, as we learn from these, that after a succession of dry years—immediately preceding the conquest—there was so great a scarcity of water in the canals, as greatly to impede their navigation, and that to remedy the evil, it had become necessary to construct an aqueduct, to convey water into the city, to feed them, from the neighboring village of Coyocan. That portion of the lake of Tezcoco between the causeway of Iztapalapan (now of San Augustin) and that of Tacuba, or San Cosmé, was always the most shallow, as Cortez, when speaking in one of his letters, of his operations during the siege, complains that although he had cut sluices in the causeway, to permit his brigantines to pass freely, he could not approach the city with them in this direction, in consequence of the numerous bars and shallows. Accordingly, this was the first part of the lake to dry up, as we have seen. As the waters receded, the grounds were ditched, and the Indians laid them out in gardens, which they called *Chinampas*, after the floating gardens, many of which still existed, in the days of Cortez; but they have all since disappeared. After the conquest, the recession of the waters, which had been slowly going on for

centuries previously, became more rapid from artificial causes. The clearing and cultivation of the soil, as well in the valley as on the mountain slopes, caused increased evaporation, and an additional deposit of detritus or alluvion; and as the bottoms of the lakes became exposed, they were drained and ditched as already described. Lake Tezcoco diminished more rapidly than Xochimilco and Chalco; the two latter being supplied more or less by small fountains in their vicinity, even in the driest seasons, while the former was dependent, almost entirely, upon the torrents that rushed down the mountain sides, in the season of rains. Notwithstanding this gradual diminution of the waters, however, the ancient city of Mexico was subject to frequent inundations; and when it was destroyed by Cortez—the destruction during the siege was almost entire—this chieftain encamped, for some time, with his army, in the neighboring village of Coyocan, debating with himself whether he would rebuild it on its ancient site, or remove it to the adjacent heights between Tacubaya (near Chapultepec) and Tacuba. He finally decided in favor of the ancient site endeared to him by so many romantic associations, and consecrated by the blood and toil of his companions. What had cost him so much labor and anxiety to win, he was loth to abandon, and in his visions of the future, he could not avoid picturing to himself "*La Señora de todas estas provincias*"—the queen-city of all these provinces—rising like a Phoenix from the ashes of the famous Tenochtitlan. So far, at least, as picturesque beauty was concerned, he was unquestionably right, for the valley of Mexico, in this respect, has no competitor on the earth's surface. The construction of the new city was commenced in 1521. Between this period and the year 1607, it was several times inundated, and in the latter year it was submerged deeper than it had ever been before, causing great destruction of life and property. These periodical overflows had scarcely been regarded by the Indians, as the old city was crossed in every direction by canals, and their ordinary traffic was carried on in canoes. Their houses, too, being constructed, for the most part, on piles, the only inconvenience they suffered was the necessity of betaking themselves for awhile to the upper stories. It was a very different case with the Spaniards, however. In their day, the communication between the different parts of the



city was no longer by water. Cortez, in prosecuting the siege, had found it necessary, so obstinate was the resistance, to level the houses with the ground as he advanced, and with their materials to fill up the canals, so as to give himself a firm footing for his cavalry and artillery. The new city was built upon this artificial level, the communication by streets taking the place of that by canals. Hence, when an inundation occurred, it confined the inhabitants to their houses, and put an end, for the time being, to all the commerce of the city. So seriously were these inconveniences felt, in the great inundation of 1607, that Philip III. issued an edict to remove the city to the heights on which Cortez had contemplated founding it. This edict was annulled, however, at the instance of the municipality of the city, who represented to their sovereign that a destruction of property to the value of twenty-one millions would be the consequence. Attention was now paid to draining the lakes, as a substitute for the old system of dikes and embankments, which had been found insufficient to guard against the periodical overflows. The Grand Plaza of Mexico is elevated about forty-eight inches above the level of Lake Tezcoco. The level of San Cristobal is one hundred and fifty-two inches above that of Tezcoco, and consequently one hundred and four inches above that of the Plaza of Mexico; and the elevation of Lake Zumpango is still greater. The process of inundation is as follows: In seasons of extraordinary rains, Lake Zumpango becomes swollen by the torrents which empty into it, and discharges its surplus waters into San Cristobal. The waters of San Cristobal, in turn, overflow the dikes and embankments, which separate them from Lake Tezcoco; and the latter, receiving thus, all the surplus water of two lakes, inundates the city—a rise of anything over four feet being sufficient for this purpose. The meadows of San Lazaro, east, and northeast of the city, being the lowest, are the first to be submerged. The river Guatitlan being the principal cause of the overflow of Lake Zumpango, it became evident that if the waters of this stream could be diverted, the whole evil would be remedied. But this it was difficult to do, as the whole valley was surrounded by mountain-ranges of more or less elevation, the gorges winding through which, were vastly elevated above the bed of this river. An

accurate and diligent survey proved that nothing short of a tunnel, through which a canal should pass, would effect the object. Gigantic as this operation appeared, it was undertaken, and what is truly astonishing, was completed in two years—fifteen thousand Indians having been constantly employed upon it! This tunnel and canal—called the *Desague*—drain—of *Huehuetoca*—answer their purpose perfectly; and there is no longer any danger to be apprehended, from the fullness of the lakes. The waters of the Guatitlan are turned into the river Tula, on the other side of the valley of Mexico; these in turn flow into the Panuco, and the Panuco discharges itself into the gulf of Mexico; so that the *desague* of *Huehuetoca* has connected the waters of the romantic lakes of the valley of Mexico, with the great Atlantic ocean, where, mingling with our waters of the Mississippi valley, they perform the circuit of the world together. It thus appears, that the modern city of Mexico, which we are about to assault, is situated in a meadow, some three miles distant from the shores of the nearest lake.

When General Scott arrived at Ayotla, he found himself suddenly checked by the enemy's outer line of fortified posts; the Peñon and Mexicalcingo bearding him in front. The Peñon is an abrupt, isolated hill, situated on the causeway, over which the main road from Puebla and Vera Cruz, passes to the city. It is inaccessible on one side, and on the other was defended by several tier of bristling cannon, rising one above the other, and by breastworks and ditches. It commanded the road by an enfilading fire, for a long distance, and there were no other means of approaching it; the meadows on either side of the road, being partially submerged in water, and mucky and boggy. Mexicalcingo, to the left—our left—of the Peñon, is some four or five miles nearer the city than this fortification, and stands at the head of a short and narrow causeway, that debouches into the causeway of San Augustin, a short distance in the rear of Churubusco, and which it commanded in like manner by an enfilading fire. There was no passing between these two causeways, the ground being more or less a marsh; nor between the Peñon and Lake Texcoco on the one hand, or Mexicalcingo and the lakes Chalco and Xochimilco, on the other, for the same reason. It was neces-

sary, therefore, either to carry the Peñon or Mexicalcingo, by a front attack, or seek some route to the city, by the east, around lake Texcoco, or by the west, around lake Chalco. To determine which of these things was best to be done, the engineers were employed several days in making active and minute reconnoissances. In the meantime, General Santa Anna, having held a council of war in Guadalupe Hidalgo, at which all his general officers attended, decided upon his plan of defense; which was to offer and accept no battle in the field, but to make the campaign one of fortified posts. He was informed, as early as the 8th of August, two days before the arrival of General Scott in the valley, of the intention of this officer to concentrate his forces at Ayotla; and having dispatched General Valencia, with four or five thousand horse, to the village of Texcoco, he took up his own quarters at the Peñon on the evening of the 9th. The road leading round lake Texcoco, by the east, to Guadalupe Hidalgo, was to form the line of General Valencia's operations—Guadalupe Hidalgo to be his base, upon which he was to fall back if necessary. This general was directed, in the event of our attacking the Peñon, or Mexicalcingo, which Santa Anna seemed to think highly probable, to annoy our right flank, and in the event of our being repulsed, to follow up our rear, and endeavor to effect our destruction. At the same time, General Alvarez—commanding a body of wild Indian *lanceros*, from the south—was directed, when the rearmost of our divisions—Pillow's—should come up, to take post at or near the Rio Frio, so as to cut off any retreat we might attempt upon Puebla. In all these dispositions, General Santa Anna displayed the abilities of a great general; and if he had added to these, the *prestige* of personal courage, in which he seems on many occasions to have been deficient, and been supported properly by his officers and men, I should probably have a very different story to record. The reconnoissances of our engineers showed, as I have stated, that there was no passing to the city of Mexico, between lakes Texcoco, and Chalco, or Xochimilco, except by the causeways of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo, and that both of these works were of formidable strength. There were fifty-one pieces of artillery mounted on the Peñon, and five batteries, of two or three guns each, at Mexicalcingo. These works

were not pronounced impracticable, but it was agreed on all hands, that they could not be carried without great loss; and when carried, it mattered not which we might select for the attack, we should still be far from the city, on a narrow causeway flanked by marshes, and easily susceptible of defense. The Peñon being regarded as much the more formidable of the two, General Scott early abandoned all idea of assaulting that point, but continued to push his reconnoissances in the direction of Mexicalcingo, evidently with the intention of trying his fortune in that quarter. The design of flanking the enemy by the right, by taking the road around Tezcoco, on which General Valencia was posted, and which Santa Anna, in his orders to this officer, seems to have supposed possible—the road being quite practicable—was not once entertained. It would have required us to march thirty miles and more, to reach Guadalupe Hidalgo, by this route; and it was not known, accurately, what was the nature of the enemy's defenses, in that quarter. At Guadalupe Hidalgo, we should have been met, too, by another causeway, over which it would have been necessary for us to fight our way into the city.

The western route, by way of Chalco, General Scott had frequently spoken of before leaving Puebla, as the most desirable, should it prove practicable. Indeed, it was only necessary to cast a glance at the map, and at the enemy's works, to be convinced of this; but strangely enough, this route, after our arrival in the valley, seemed to have been abandoned as impracticable. I wish the reader to pay particular attention to the statements which follow, as grave circumstances afterward grew out of them. The engineers, at head-quarters, had examined, both at Puebla, and after our arrival in the valley, numerous travelers and other persons, as well foreigners as natives, as to the nature of this route; and the testimony had uniformly been, that it was not passable, for artillery and wagons, and scarcely for cavalry. Paid spies were sent over it, who reported the same thing. General Scott arrived in the valley, on the 10th, and the reconnoissances of the next two days were sufficient to show him, the many difficulties which beset him in front, and the necessity there was for flanking the enemy, either by the right or the left. Still, so completely convinced did he and his engineers appear to be, of the hopelessness

of any attempt to pass by the denounced route, to the south and west of Chalco, that no reconnoissance was ever attempted to be pushed in that direction. I lay stress upon this circumstance, for afterward, when victory had gloriously crowned our standard, it was claimed by General Scott's friends, that he had *all along* intended to move his army over this route, and that therefore the credit of the movement was entirely his own. When, for several successive days, we see the engineers at head-quarters, making diligent reconnoissances in the neighborhood of Mexicalcingo, and neglecting entirely the route by Chalco, what are we to infer?—The question of a direct attack or a flank movement was one of life and death with us; the triumph or failure of the campaign, in all probability, depended upon it. This being the case, does it comport with common sense to suppose, that the general-in-chief would fail to reconnoiter, *by his own engineers*, the route which he "all along" had intended to take? And does it not strike the military reader as singular, that this route, from first to last, was never reconnoitered by any engineer at all? Further, if General Scott entertained no design of attacking Mexicalcingo, why were his chief engineer, and all the other engineer force of the army, employed for four days, in reconnoitering that post?—Men's intentions must be judged of from their actions, in the absence of contrary proof; and I have seen none rebutting this intention on the part of the general-in-chief.

The report at length reaching our head-quarters—still at the village of Chalco—that General Scott was preparing for an attack on Mexicalcingo, General Worth, on the morning of the 14th, deeply convinced of the necessity of preventing this, if possible, dispatched Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, and Captain Mackall, his assistant adjutant-general—he had no engineer officer at his disposal—with an escort of three hundred men, picked from the different regiments of the division, to examine the denounced and abandoned route. I asked, and obtained the general's permission to accompany this reconnoissance. Whatever of credit there is attached to it, the reader perceives, of course, that no part of it belongs to me, since I accompanied it out of mere curiosity, and belonged to a branch of the service, which could not be supposed to be conversant with military topography. I must be excused,

therefore, for mentioning that I accompanied it, since I merely make the statement for the purpose of showing, that I was an eye-witness of the proceedings I record, and to which much importance has been justly attached, since they changed the whole face of the campaign, and inscribed new glories on our banner, which, perhaps, but for them, would never have been achieved. The main road from Vera Cruz, passing by *El Peñon*, was constructed in 1804. Previous to that time, the route which we were about to explore, had been much traveled ; but since then, it had been almost entirely abandoned. It was but little known, therefore, by the Mexicans themselves. General Santa Anna had taken no precautions to defend it, or even to prevent it from being reconnoitered ; so far was it from his thoughts, that we should be able to pass over it. He had probably relied for his information, in regard to it, upon ignorant countrymen, or chance travelers, as General Scott's engineers had done.

Col. McIntosh's regiment of infantry was moved out as far as Ayocingo to support us, in the event of our being obliged to fall back. The morning was beautiful, as usual, and although, like our old friend, Bernal Diaz, we could not but be mindful of the hazardous nature of the expedition in which we were embarked, we soon ceased to regard ourselves, in the contemplation of the landscape by which we were surrounded. This is the most novel and interesting part of the great valley, and romantic historical associations arose at every step, to consecrate, as it were, the levelness of nature. For the first four miles, to Ayocingo—the same Ayocingo whose ambassadors had complained to Cortez, of the oppressions of Montezuma—our road lay through immense corn-fields, covering many acres of the level and fertile valley of Chalco. Ayocingo is a small village, containing some 1200 inhabitants, and lies picturesquely at the base of a mountain-range that circumscribes the western portion of the valley, and near the borders of the lake—on the very shores of which it once stood. From this point, our road bent more to the westward, and followed the base of the hills that ran boldly down to the shores of the lake. Lake Chalco, as now seen by us, was no longer the magnificent sheet of water surrounded by villages, which it had appeared to Cortez. It was little else than an

extensive marsh, intersected in various directions by grass-grown canals, and natural channels, sufficient only for the passage of small boats. Some three miles after leaving Ayocingo, the flat, unsightly surface of the marsh is agreeably changed into what appears to be a richly cultivated meadow. Haciendas of great extent, with their castellated dwellings, and church-domes and spires rising above, and contrasting prettily with the surrounding foliage—now bearing the richest tints of green, in consequence of the daily rains—were seen in all directions, with their extensive fields of corn, and rich pasture-grounds, on which were quietly grazing numerous herds of cattle. These immense estates, of the richest bottom-lands, were separated from each other, and crossed and re-crossed, not by roads, but by canals, on which were seen the patient and laborious Indians, plying to and from the towns and villages in the neighborhood, and to and from the great city itself, in their canoes, laden with products for the markets, or with the supplies which they had purchased with these. Along these various canals, a complicated net-work of dikes had been constructed, to guard against the periodical overflows of the water. Rows of the willow, and of the Lombardy poplar, with its tall and graceful cone, were planted on the banks of these dikes, forming avenues of great extent, and giving an air of baronial grandeur to the landscape. The simple Indians, who cultivate these estates, have, many of them, never been beyond the precincts of their marshy homes; and in point of intelligence and civilization, are no better than those I have already described. One fancies himself all the while, to be looking upon the ancient Aztecs, when this primitive people were groping among the islands in the lakes for subsistence, long prior to the foundation of Mexico.

The inhabitants of the villages along this unfrequented road, beheld in us, for the first time, the *terrible North Americans*, who had been represented to them, in the proclamations of their rulers, as so many barbarians, marching under the banner of an Alaric, or an Attila, to destroy them. Most of them fled terror-stricken at our approach, and might have been seen on the craggy hills, singly, or in clusters, looking down upon us with the stupid stare of credulity and curiosity. Others, more bold than their companions, or surprised when too late to fly, awaited our approach

on the road-side, and were apparently much relieved to find us but men, who had no intention to devour them. These, their fears dissipated, soon manifested a friendly disposition, and gave us, apparently in good faith, all the information we required of them, concerning the road, etc., and brought us out from their huts, cool water, and such other simple refreshments as they had to offer. I even extracted rather a coquettish smile, from a pretty-looking damsel, when I asked her what she thought of the *barbarians*—*"que tal de los barbaros?"*

We extended our reconnoissance as far as *Tulancingo*, some twelve miles from Chalco, and more than half the distance from the latter place to San Augustin; the proposed base of operations against the city, which we were desirous to reach. In doing this, we passed through the small towns of Teteleo and San Juan, both situated on the margin of the lake, and having water communication with the city of Mexico. Just before reaching San Juan, we entered an immense olive grove—the olive of commerce—the trees of which—laden with the green fruit—grew to an immense size, and interlaced their wide-spreading branches, so as to exclude almost entirely the rays of the sun. In these perennial shades, where reigned, by day, a perpetual twilight, giving one the idea of the druidical groves of the ancients, the natives had built several small towns—San Juan among the number. There were no "clearings" made in the grove—or rather, I should call it wood—for the accommodation of these villages, but the houses nestled, as it were, beneath and among the gigantic trees, so perfectly embowered as to be invisible at the distance of a few hundred yards. The huts composing these towns were in no respect superior to the wigwams of our North American Indians; an inclosure of wicker-work, thatched with the rank grass of the adjoining lake, being their only architecture. From the center of each hut, arose the smoke of the fire, over which was boiled the *frijole*, or baked the *tortilla*. The whole scene struck me as being the most novel, it had ever been my lot to witness.

The road, although "practicable," in military phrase, both for artillery and wagons, was, in many places, very rough—the sierra or mountain range sometime running so far into the lake, as to have made it necessary to construct portions of the road over a



bed of rock ; which, however, we found tolerably well executed to our hands. After reaching Tulancingo, we had passed over the worst part of the road ; and being fully satisfied of the practicability of the whole route, as well as agreeably astonished at our discovery, we returned to report progress, arriving at our headquarters by 3 P. M., after having performed a march (with infantry) of twenty-four miles. I never saw men march with more alacrity, or manifest more enthusiasm, than did this small body of veterans ; they seemed positively disappointed, when they found themselves back in their camp, without having met an enemy. The unmolested manner, in which we had been permitted to make this important reconnoissance, can only be explained on the hypothesis before advanced, viz : that Santa Anna, himself, had been deceived as to the practicability of the route.

General Worth was highly gratified at the success of our expedition, and so anxious was he to lay the results of it before the general-in-chief, that he dispatched Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, notwithstanding the fatigue of his march, forthwith to general headquarters—some ten miles distant—to make his report in person. It has been stated that this reconnoissance was undertaken by General Worth, mainly on account of a report which had reached us, and to which general credence was given, that General Scott designed attacking Mexicalcingo. It was understood that his plan of operations consisted in assaulting this work, with the principal part of his force, while the remainder of it, composed of light troops, disembarrassed of artillery and baggage, should endeavor to make its way over the route we had just explored (and which was supposed to be impracticable for the whole army), with the view of forming a junction, at or near San Augustin, with the main body, after the latter should have opened for itself a passage through Mexicalcingo. Our small army was thus to be divided, and subjected, in all probability, to be beaten, in detail. It was to prevent this, that Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan was now dispatched in such haste, to general headquarters ; General Worth, beside charging him to make his report, in person to General Scott, intrusting him with a letter to this officer, modestly suggesting his own views. The general's letter was strictly official, all unreserved social intercourse having ceased for some

time, between him, and his commander-in-chief. It was as follows, viz :

“HEAD-QUARTERS, 1ST DIV., *Chalco*, Aug. 14, 1847.

“GENERAL:—I have the honor to submit the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, whom I selected to conduct an important reconnoissance, and to solicit for it your own particular examination; and in doing so, I feel assured you will kindly excuse a few suggestions. This report solves all doubts as to the practicability of the southern route (or that around lake Chalco), and demonstrates the facility of reversing the enemy's main positions, where they have bestowed their principal labor, and placed their principal armament, before the latter can be shifted to the quarter in the neighborhood of Tacubaya. 2dly, that this route will give you elbow room, a large field of supplies, and keep your force, numerically so inferior, intact—a point, it appears to my mind, of first importance, until a paralyzing blow shall have been struck, and an important and commanding position attained. Once with your entire force at San Augustin, or still better, Tacubaya, and you have the game in your own hands, freed from all the doubts and anxieties of detached and isolated corps—in a word, taking and keeping the initiative. Opposed to these views; I can only imagine one of consideration, viz : that we abandon our line, and enable the enemy to place himself in the rear—to which I answer, that we are not in circumstances to *entertain the question of the rear*. This army has passed the Rubicon, and has no resource but victory, which in my judgment will be assured by united action. Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan bears this, and will be at hand, to give any further explanations of his reconnoissance.

“I have the honor to be, with much respect, your ob't serv't,

“W. J. WORTH.

“Maj. Gen. WIN. SCOTT, com'd'r-in-chief, U. S. A., in Mexico.”

This advice of General Worth was taken, and the reader will perceive, as we advance, the brilliant results. But in order that I may dispose of this whole subject, without the necessity of again recurring to so unpleasant a theme, I beg permission of the reader to anticipate somewhat the course of events. When this recom-

reconnaissance became a matter of controversy, it was claimed that General Scott had ordered it;\* but beside the circumstances already noticed, negating this presumption, one of the chief of which is, that not only no engineer was ever dispatched from general head-quarters in this direction, but none was detailed for service, in General Worth's division, until afterward, I beg the reader's attention, a moment, to General Worth's letter. This officer does not report the result of *the* reconnaissance which he had been *directed to make*, which would have been the usual and proper formula, if he had been *ordered to make one*, but states that he has the honor to submit the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, whom he selected to make *an important* reconnaissance, and solicits for it, the general-in-chief's *own particular examination*. And so far was he from understanding it to be General Scott's intention to pass his whole army over the denounced route, or his desire to have it reconnoitered with this view—which he must have understood, had he received any orders on the subject—that he apologizes for the *suggestions* he makes to this end. But the reader can judge of the whole context of the letter for himself, and say whether, taken in connection with all the antecedent circumstances, it does not establish beyond cavil, that General Worth made this reconnaissance on his own responsibility, and thus turned the whole course of the campaign. With the modesty that belonged to General Worth, in a peculiar degree, as a military man, and which shines forth so conspicuously in all his dispatches, as contrasted with the style of so many other dispatches to which the war has given birth, he never claimed any merit for performing, for the army and the country, this great service. He scarcely ever spoke of it, and I am sure, he would

---

\* That General Scott gave the usual general order to General Worth (as well as to other chiefs of his divisions) to reconnoiter the enemy's positions in his vicinity, is quite probable, but that this order (if any was given) was meant to point particularly at the reconnaissance of Chalco, or even to authorize it, no one dreamed, until its important results became manifest. There is no particular merit intended to be attached to the *making* of this reconnaissance, but there was merit in conceiving the bold design of changing, if possible, the false strategy of the general-in-chief; and the reconnaissance was undertaken with this view, and had the desired effect, as stated in the text.

have dismissed the subject forever from his mind, but for the occurrences which I am about to relate; and which, I fain would draw a veil over, did I not deem it an act of common justice to place the facts, in their proper light, before the public, in order that I may contribute my mite of testimony to the future historian, who, when the actors themselves shall all have passed from the scene of their glory, shall inscribe in his country's annals the events of this memorable campaign. Unfortunately, it too often happens, that histories are mere compilations of state papers, giving to the events they record, the biases and prejudices of their authors. Histories of wars, in particular, are compiled in this way; and hence we read little else in these productions, than the views and opinions of commanding generals; and the facts—often seen from an improper point of view, and sometimes with an eye of prejudice and dislike—which they record. Movements and points of strategy which have been originated, and perhaps carried out, without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, in the dispatch, and in the history, have always been foreseen with the eye of prescience, and directed *ex cathedra*. These are generally honest illusions, but illusions which it is the duty of the historian to guard his readers against, if possible. After we had fought the battle of Churubusco, and while we were at Tacubaya, Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, in writing to a brother officer at Pittsburgh, gave him a description of events up to that period. This letter was designed to be private, but as all news from the army was greedily caught up by our citizens at that time, the colonel's friend gratified the public curiosity, by, very harmlessly as he thought, giving the letter to the Pittsburgh Post for publication. the following is so much of this letter as is material to our present purpose, viz :

TACUBAYA, *Mexico*, Aug. 27, 1847.

"The whole force, which moved from Puebla, amounted to ten thousand men, more or less, marching in four columns, on successive days, in the following order, viz: Twiggs, Quitman, Worth, and Pillow. In approaching the city of Mexico by the main highway, you go directly on to the height of El Peñon, which is a strong position and excessively fortified. Before leaving Puebla,

it had been considered whether the main road could not be avoided, and El Peñon turned, by passing around to the south and left of lakes Chalco and Xochimilco. The engineer officers, serving immediately at general head-quarters, had questioned a large number of persons (including spies and agents sent expressly to examine the route), and the mass of testimony was entire, to the boggy, mucky, and perfectly impracticable character for wagons and artillery, of the road leading in that direction. It was, therefore, in contemplation to turn El Peñon by forcing Mexicalcingo, although the ground was difficult, and the batteries known to be numerous. This route, you will observe, is to the north and right of these lakes. The reconnoissances of the engineers were consequently directed to this end. In the meantime, General Worth, whose division had been left at Chalco (while General Scott, with Twiggs, had gone on to Ayotla), sent Colonel Duncan with a large party, to examine the denounced route. Colonel Duncan found it just the reverse of what it had been pronounced to be; it was firm, rocky, and quite practicable, requiring, to be sure, a little labor here and there. General Worth instantly sent Colonel Duncan, with this information, to General Scott, and urged the movement of the whole army to the left of lake Chalco. The direct attack was abandoned, and the next morning, the whole army was in motion."

I should inform the reader, that this was rather a compilation, made from the colonel's letter, than a literal extract. The description which I have given of this reconnoissance, in a previous page, was taken from my notes, made at the time. The reader perceives, of course, the close resemblance, if not identity of the facts, in that description, with those set forth by the colonel in his letter. If General Scott gave any special order to have this reconnoissance made, at the same time that he sent no engineer, as I have before said, to make it, Colonel Duncan was as ignorant of the fact as myself. Sometime after the publication of this letter, and when we had arrived in the city of Mexico, some newspapers were received at head-quarters, and among others, a copy of a Tampico paper containing the letter in question. Immediately upon its being brought to the notice of General Scott, this officer sat down and penned his famous order, No. 349, as follows, viz:

## "GENERAL ORDERS, No. 349.

"HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY, *Mexico*, Nov. 12, 1847.

"The attention of certain officers of this army is recalled to the foregoing regulation [a regulation prohibiting officers of the army from detailing in private letters, or reports, the movements of the army], which the general-in-chief is resolved to enforce, so far as it may be in his power. As yet but two echoes, from home, of the brilliant operations of our arms in this basin, have reached us—the first in a New Orleans, and the second through a Tampico newspaper.

"It requires not a little charity to believe, that the principal heroes of the scandalous letters alluded to, did not write them, or specially procure them to be written; and the intelligent can be at no loss in conjecturing the authors—chiefs, partisans, and pet-familiars. To the honor of the service, the disease—pruriency of fame, *not* earned—cannot have seized upon half a dozen officers (present) all of whom, it is believed, belong to the same two coteries. False credit may, no doubt, be obtained at home by such despicable self-puffings, and malignant exclusion of others; but at the expense of the just esteem and consideration of all honorable officers who love their country, their profession, and the truth of history. The indignation of the great number of the latter class cannot fail, in the end, to bring down the conceited and the envious to their proper level.

"By command of Major-General Scott.

"H. L. SCOTT, A. A. A. G."

The reader is, no doubt, not only astonished at the keen style of invective, of the foregoing grave state-paper, published in a recently conquered capital, and to a gallant army, but must be at a loss to conjecture how Colonel Duncan's simple narrative of facts (until then uncontested) could have produced such a storm of indignation! If the facts were not true, the relation of them (being simply a newspaper account) could do no possible harm to the general-in-chief! There would be ample means at hand, wherewith to contradict them, and the "truth of history" would not be perverted. If they were true (and they have not yet been disproved), then, although they found their way to the public, in

violation of an obsolete regulation of the war-department (which could only have been meant to apply to letters written, preceding or pending operations; which letters, by falling into the enemy's hands, or making the operations public, might be prejudicial to such operations—none of which reasons applied in the present case), they should not have been denounced as untrue. In short, whether they were true or untrue, does it not strike the reader as somewhat out of taste, that the general-in-chief of an army, should already begin to write the history of his campaign, and to quarrel with his subordinates about newspaper accounts of it? The reader, upon perusing Colonel Duncan's letter, perceives, at once, that General Worth is the "hero" of it, and that consequently, when General Scott denounced the "hero" of this "scandalous" letter, he intended to, and did denounce General Worth; charging this officer with, either having written the letter, or specially procured it to be written. I beg the reader to mark the correspondence which follows, and to note the want of magnanimity which it displays, on the part of the general-in-chief. General Worth, feeling deeply wounded, as a gentleman and an officer, at being charged before the whole army, and the world, with "despicable self-puffing," sat down and wrote the following temperate and respectful letter, to his commanding general.

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 1ST DIV., *Mexico*, Nov. 13, 1847.

"SIR:—I learn, with much astonishment, that the prevailing opinion in this army, points the imputations of 'scandalous' conduct, in the third, and the invocation of 'the indignation of the great number,' in the fourth paragraph of order No. 349, printed and issued on yesterday, to myself, as *one* of the officers alluded to. Although I cannot suppose those opinions to be correctly formed, nevertheless, regarding the high source from which such imputations flow—so seriously affecting the qualities as a gentleman, the character and usefulness as an officer of him at whom they may be aimed—I feel it incumbent on me to ask, as I now do, most respectfully, of the frankness and sense of justice of the general-in-chief, whether, in any sense or degree, he condescended to apply, or designed to have applied, the epithets contained in that order, to myself; and consequently, whether the general military

opinion or sentiment in that matter, has taken a right or intended direction. I trust I shall be pardoned for pressing with urgency an early reply to this communication.

"Very respectfully, etc.,

"W. J. WORTH, Brev't Maj. Gen'l, Com'd'g 1st Div.

"Maj. Gen'l WINFIELD SCOTT, Com'd'g U. S. Army, in Mexico."

The following is General Scott's reply :

"HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY, *Mexico*, Nov. 14, 1847.

"SIR :—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, this morning, of your communication, dated the 13th inst., relative to General Orders, No. 349 ; and I am instructed by the general-in-chief to reply, 'that the General Order, No. 349, was, as is pretty clearly expressed on its face, meant to apply to a letter signed Leonidas, in a New Orleans newspaper, and to the summary of two letters given in the Washington Union, and copied into a Tampico paper—to the authors, aiders, and abettors of those letters—be they who they may.'

"I am, very respectfully, your most ob't serv't,

"H. L. SCOTT, A. A. A. G.

"Brev't Maj. Gen'l W. J. WORTH, U. S. Army."

---

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 1st Div., *Mexico*, Nov. 14, 1847.

"SIR :—I have had the honor to receive your letter in reply, but not in answer to mine of yesterday's date, handed in, this morning. The General Order is too clearly 'expressed on its face,' to admit of any doubt in regard to *papers*, and in public military opinion, in regard to *persons*. The object of my letter, as I endeavored clearly to express, was to seek to know, distinctly, and with a view to further measures to protect myself, if, as is supposed, I was one of the persons referred to. Regretting this necessity for intrusion, I am compelled again, respectfully, to solicit an answer to that question. I ask it as an act of simple justice, which it is hoped will not be denied.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

"W. J. WORTH, Brev't Maj. Gen'l, Com'd'g 1st Div."



"HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY, *Mexico*, Nov. 14, 1847.

"SIR :—The general-in-chief desires me to reply to your note of this date, by saying, that he cannot be more explicit than in his reply through me, already given. That he has nothing to do with the suspicions of others, and has no positive information as to the authorship of the letters alluded to, in General Orders, No. 349. If he had valid information, he would immediately prosecute the parties before a general court-martial.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

"H. L. SCOTT, A. A. A. G.

"Brev't Maj. Gen. W. J. WORTH, U. S. Army."

---

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 1ST DIV., *Mexico*, Nov. 14, 1847.

"SIR :—It is due to official courtesy and propriety, that I acknowledge your letter, No. 2, in answer to mine of this date, and in doing so, and in closing this correspondence with the head-quarters of this army, I beg permission to say, and with regret, that I have received no satisfactory answer to the just and rightful inquiries, which I have addressed to the general-in-chief; but, inasmuch as I know myself to be deeply aggrieved and wronged, it only remains to go by appeal, as I shall do, through the prescribed channels, to the constitutional commander-in-chief. The general-in-chief is pleased to say through you, that he has 'nothing to do with the suspicions of others, and that he has no positive information himself, as to authorship,' etc. Granted. But has not the manner in which the general-in-chief has been pleased to treat the case, established, whether designedly or not remains to be seen, an unequivocal public sentiment on the subject? There are always enough of that peculiar and pestilential species who only exist upon the breath of authority, to catch up the whisperings of fancy, and infect a whole military community. I do not design to be stifled under the miasma of such, nor stricken down in my advanced age, without an effort to convince my friends, that I scorn to wear 'honors not earned.'

"I remain, your ob't serv't,

"W. J. WORTH," etc., etc., etc.

" HEAD-QUARTERS, 1ST DIV. OF ARMY IN MEXICO,  
November 16, 1847.

" To the Hon. the Secretary of War, Washington :

" SIR :—From the arbitrary and illegal conduct—the malice and gross injustice practiced by the general officer, commanding-in-chief this army—Major-General Winfield Scott—I appeal, as is my right and privilege, to the constitutional commander-in-chief—the president of the United States. I accuse Major-General Winfield Scott of having acted in a manner *unbecoming an officer, and a gentleman*. He has availed himself of his position, to publish, by authority, to the army which he commands, and of the influence of his station, to give the highest effect to an order, bearing date, November 12th, 1847, and numbered 349 (official printed copy herewith), calculated and designed to cast odium and disgrace upon Brevet Major-General Worth ; to bring that general officer into disrepute with the army, and to lessen, if not destroy, his just influence, and proper authority, with those officers and soldiers over whom he is placed in command.—That he has without inquiry or investigation, in the said order (published to the army and to the world), falsely charged Brevet Major-General Worth, with having written, caused to be written, or connived at the writing, a certain letter, published in the United States, and to which he has been pleased to apply the epithets of ‘scandalous, malignant,’ etc.! That he has made these statements to the world, giving to them the sanction of his high authority, and the influence of his position, while he has acknowledged that he had no information as to the authorship of the letter, in question ; and when respectfully and properly addressed upon the subject, by the undersigned appellant, he has declined to reply whether or not he intended to impute to Brevet Major-General Worth, conduct which he had characterized as ‘scandalous, malignant,’ etc.—be pleased to refer to correspondence, herewith, marked from A to E.

" I do not urge present action on these accusations, because of the inconvenience to the service, in withdrawing many officers from their duties ; but I do humbly and respectfully invoke the president's examination into the case, and such notice thereof, and

protection from the arbitrary conduct of the said general, as he may deem suitable.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,  
"W. J. WORTH, Brev't Maj. Gen'l U. S. Army."

The above appeal was written on the 16th of November, but not handed in to General Scott, to be forwarded—according to the rules of the service—until the 24th, eight days afterward; General Worth retaining it with the vain hope, that reflection and a returning sense of justice would induce his commander-in-chief, to abandon the unfortunate position he had taken, and to make him some reparation for the grievous wrong he had done him.—On the same day of the date of this appeal, and consequently eight days before General Scott saw it, Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan published in the *North American*, an American newspaper, published in the capital, the following letter, viz :

"MEXICO, November 13, 1847.

"*To the Editor of the North American.* SIR:—I herewith present a copy of the 'Tampico letter,' characterized as 'scandalous,' 'despicable,' 'malignant,' etc., in General Orders, No. 349, published in the *American Star* [another newspaper—the government paper, if I may so call it—which had accompanied the headquarters of General Scott, in all his movements, and received the patronage of the public printing] of this morning. To the end that the true character of this letter may be known, I desire that you republish it in your paper [the reader has already seen so much of it, as was material to my purpose]; and that none of my brother officers may innocently suffer for a publication so obnoxious, I hereby publicly acknowledge myself to be its author. The substance of it, I communicated from Tacubaya, soon after the battles, in a private letter to a friend in Pittsburgh. The statements in the letter, are known by very many officers in this army, to be true; and I can but think that the publication of truth is less likely to do violence to individuals, or the service, than the suppression or perversion of it. Justice to General Worth (who is evidently one of the 'heroes' pointed at, in order No. 349), requires me to state, that he knew nothing whatever of my purpose to write

the letter in question, nor that it had been written, until well on its way to its destination ; he never saw, nor did he know, directly or indirectly, even the purport of one line, word, or syllable of it, until he saw it in print ; and he is equally ignorant of my design to make this declaration, which I do, as I wrote the letter, unprompted, and on my own responsibility.

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

JAMES DUNCAN, Brev't Lieut. Col. U. S. A.

It is greatly to be regretted that General Scott, upon the perusal of the above frank and manly letter, acquitting General Worth of all suspicion of blame in the matter referred to, should not, at once, by an equally frank and magnanimous avowal of his entire conviction of the innocence of the latter, have relieved him from the oppressive weight by which he felt himself borne down, because of the unjust and degrading imputation which had been cast upon him. Had he done so, a chivalrous officer would have been saved the humiliation of being put under arrest, in an enemy's country, in the very hour of his proudest achievement ; the country would have been saved the shame of her gallant warriors engaging in a personal struggle over the very bodies, as it were, of their fallen foe ; and the commanding general himself saved the, perhaps, greater mortification of having his own acts passed, in unfavorable review, before his constitutional commander-in-chief. In giving the above plain statement to the public, I have been actuated by no desire to rip up old wounds, or revive, unnecessarily, unpleasant recollections. I have written more in sorrow than in anger—sorrow that nature, in weaving her web of the human character, should so inexplicably have intermingled with her threads of gold, others of a less brilliant material.

Mr. Marcy, secretary of war, upon receipt of dispatches from General Scott, acquainting him with the difficulties which had arisen between that officer and General Worth, addressed to the former, a letter, of which the following are extracts. Independently of the interest which attaches to this letter, as connected with the distinguished persons to whom it relates, it is an able and valuable exposition of the military principles involved in the subject-matter of it. Military and naval men may study, with advan-

tags, the sound maxims of law and common sense contained in this admirable dispatch :

“WAR DEPARTMENT, January 13, 1848.

“SIR:—Since I addressed you on the 14th of December, the following communications have been received, viz: your dispatches Nos. 30, 36, 37, 38, and 39; a copy of the correspondence between yourself and Commodore Shubrick; his letter of the 16th of November, and yours in reply, of the 2d December; and copies of charges and specifications against Major-General Pillow, Brevet Major-General Worth, and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan.

“The perusal of these communications by the president, has forced upon his mind the painful conviction, that there exists a state of things at the head-quarters of the army, which is exceedingly detrimental to the public service, and imperiously calls upon him to interpose in such a way as will, he sincerely hopes, arrest and put an end to the feuds and dissensions which there prevail.

“After the fullest consideration of the subject, the president has not been able to give his approval to the course you have adopted toward Brevet Major-General Worth, and for reasons which I will briefly state, he defers, for the present at least, to order a court-martial for his trial, on the charge you have presented against him. The document shows that General Worth felt deeply aggrieved by your ‘General Order, No. 349.’ Imputations of a very serious character were, by that order, cast upon *some* of the officers under your immediate command, and, from its peculiar phraseology, it was understood by General Worth, or others, as indicating him as one of the officers obnoxious to the severe censure and reproof therein contained. With this view of the import and object of the order, his attempt, by all proper means, to remove from himself the ignominy of these imputations, cannot be regarded as an exceptionable course on his part. As the stroke which had, as he thought, deeply wounded his honor as an officer, and his character as a man, came from your hands, his application for redress was properly made to you; but as he did not obtain such redress, as he believed, under the circumstances of the case, was due to him, he exercised, or attempted to exercise the right of an appeal to superior authority. If he was actually aggrieved in this matter, or believed himself to be so, he had an unquestionable right to have the subject brought to the consideration of his and your common superior, the president of the United States. He prepared charges against you (for his letter of the 16th of November, to the secretary of war, can be viewed in no other character), and endeavored to send them through you, the only channel he could use without violating established regulations, to this common superior. For the matter contained in these charges against yourself, you have made a charge against him, forwarded it to the president and asked for his trial by a court-martial. If the course of proceeding which you propose in this case is sanctioned and carried out, you cannot but perceive that the precedent will be most fatal to the essential rights of all subordinate officers. If General Worth has been guilty of an offense, by

preparing and attempting to transmit charges against you to the president, for wrongs and injuries alleged to have been inflicted by you on him, it seems to be a necessary consequence that, whatever may be the character of the wrongs and injuries inflicted upon subordinate officers by their superiors, they cannot seek redress by appeal without being involved in a military offense. Whatever may be the injustice they suffer, the hope of remedy by appeal would be illusory, and the right to appeal worse than valueless, if, by the mere statement of their complaint, whether in the form of charges or otherwise, for the action of a common superior, they would be liable to be arrested and tried before any investigation had been made of the truth or falsity of the matters therein set forth, and even before the appeal had reached the authority which alone could afford redress. Such a principle as this would, in its practical operation, subvert justice and withhold protection from subordinate officers. If General Worth cannot make an appeal to the president on account of your conduct toward him, without committing a military offense, and certainly he cannot, if the statement of the matter of his complaint is an offense, it is difficult to perceive how any officer of inferior rank can carry an appeal to you or any other common superior, for injustice or injury done to him by an officer of a higher rank than himself, (though to appeal is the exercise of an unquestionable right), without subjecting himself to a trial by a court-martial; for every appeal which is not frivolous upon its face, must, in one form or another, impute to the officer complained of, some military offense, and, consequently, on the principle of your proceeding against General Worth, the appealing officer would be subject to arrest and trial for the matter contained in his appeal.

"As long as it is possible that a subordinate officer may suffer from a superior, justice, sound policy, and the good of the service, require and demand, that the avenue to redress should not be obstructed; but obstructed it would be in a most effectual manner, by the course of procedure which you have adopted in the case of General Worth.

"I am not unaware of the force of the considerations which may be urged against allowing the unrestricted right to subordinate officers to make complaints, and to prefer charges, to a common superior, against those who have command over them. The right may be abused; it may be resorted to for the indulgence of malicious passions, to produce dissensions in the army, and to impair the rightful authority of commanding officers; but its liability to be perverted to mischievous purposes is not a sufficient argument to prove that it should not be sustained, or its benefits be destroyed by the assumption, in the first place, without proof, that the right has not been exercised in good faith, and with justifiable motives, and then, upon that assumption, to institute proceedings for a military offense against the appealing, and, it may be, much injured officer, fairly seeking the redress to which he is entitled. But this right of appeal can rarely or never be abused with impunity. The abuse of it is an offense which can and should be punished; but it is quite important that the mode of punishing the abuse should not be such as to destroy or impair the right. To illustrate my views by the

very case under consideration: If it shall appear that General Worth has falsely and knowingly charged you with 'malice against him,' and of 'having acted in a manner unbecoming an officer and a gentleman toward him,' he has in that committed an offense for which he may and should be punished; but, before investigation, it is no more to be assumed that your charges against him are true than his against you are so. Both law and natural justice require that the order of events should be pursued in such cases. The charges which he prefers against you should be first disposed of, before proceedings can be instituted against him for malice in preferring those charges, or for presenting such as he did not know or believe to be well founded. Your charges against him go upon the ground that he is a malicious prosecutor of you. It is a well established principle, that no man can be proceeded against as a malicious prosecutor while the suit, which is alleged to be malicious, is pending; that must be disposed of before a suit for malicious prosecution can be instituted.

"In this view of the case, and it is the one the president has taken, the charges which General Worth has presented against you must be disposed of before any proceedings can be had on that which you have presented against him."

## CHAPTER XVIII

CONTINUATION of the campaign—March of the army, by the way of Chalco, to San Augustin—Halt at San Gregorio—The Padre of the village and his flock—Borders of Lake Xochimilco—Division halts at Tetelco to reconnoiter—Enters San Augustin, the base of our new line of operations—Concentration of our forces at San Augustin—Movements of the enemy—Worth takes position before San Antonio—Pillow moves in the direction of Contreras—Smith's great victory at this place—An interior view of the enemy's camp, and the spectacle of discord there witnessed.

HAVING done, in the last chapter, that justice to my friend, and contributed that mite to the "truth of history," which I have deemed my duty to require of me, I willingly turn to a more congenial subject—the continuation of the campaign.

On the afternoon of the 15th August, the day after the reconnoissance was made by Colonel Duncan, which gave rise to all the preceding controversy, the army was put in motion. General Worth's division, which, with General Pillow's, had formed the rear of our line, by this change of strategy, now became the front, and was the first to march. The low black clouds, sweeping along the horizon—the reader must bear in mind constantly, that we were in the midst of the rainy season, and that it rained every afternoon, with scarcely an exception—threatened us, at starting, with a drenching shower, and caused us to draw on our serapes, in anticipation of a wet jacket; but fortunately the clouds rolled away, and dispersed without fulfilling their threats, and we performed the evening's march, not only with dry clothes, but with dry feet. My friend Wood, who was riding by my side, upon seeing this change in the weather, remarked, as he pointed to the retreating clouds, in a tone half in earnest and half in jest: "See how fortunate we are; the clerk of the weather had evidently intended to regale us with his usual shower, this afternoon, until he heard our bugle sound the march, when, *presto! change!* away go the clouds to the mountains, to deposit upon their hoary



sides, the rains they had intended for us. Do you know, S., I am half inclined to be superstitious, when I review some of the events of this war! To begin, there was the Rio Grande swollen to an extraordinary height, and at least a month earlier than usual, to enable us to transport troops and supplies to Camargo, in aid of our march and attack upon Monterey. [General Worth, whom Wood had accompanied during the whole war, was then, as the reader knows, with General Taylor, on the northern line.] At Vera Cruz, as you remember, the terrible northers continued five or six weeks later than usual, to keep back the *vomito* until we could reach the more healthy table lands; and now, lastly, although we commenced our campaign in the midst of the rainy season, we have marched from Puebla, over dusty roads, and have arrived in the valley of Mexico to find the lakes but little swollen, and the adjacent meadows almost dry!" "I hope," said I, "the clerk of battles, as well as the clerk of the weather, will continue to keep a bright look-out for us."

We encamped at Tetelco, after a march from Chalco, of eight miles—the division bivouacking in an extensive corn-field beyond, and the general establishing his quarters in the *cabildo*, or town house, which had nothing to offer us in the way of accommodation, except good stabling for our horses, and walls and a dry roof for ourselves. We were on the very margin of the lake, with, of course, an abundance of water, and we were fortunate enough to find plenty of wood corded up on the banks—this being, as of yore, one of the points whence the pine wood cut in the mountains, is transported in flats and canoes to the city of Mexico. We were astir at daylight, the next morning, as was our custom always when on a march, and were in the saddle at 7 o'clock—the bugle having put the head of the column in motion some minutes before. The weather was very fine. The men had had a comfortable night's rest, and marched with great spirit and alacrity, unmindful of the burthen of knapsack and musket. They were proud of forming, once more, the van of the gallant little army—a position which they seemed to think belonged to them. Filing through the corn-field, in a part of which we had bivouacked, we entered the olive villages of San Juan and Tulancingo, which have already been described to the reader, and soon after passing

through the dense grove of the latter, emerged into the open country beyond. Here, halting the troops a few moments to rest, the general and his staff ascended a small eminence on the way-side, whence we had our first distinct view of the domes and steeples of Mexico; of the villages of San Augustin and Tacubaya, and of the intervening valley, teeming with beauty and luxuriance. We could trace, also, from this point, the windings of lakes Chalco and Xochimilco, and the various causeways leading to the capital, with their dikes fringed with long lines of the stately willow and mimosa. From the top of the Peñon, now in our rear, still fluttered the Mexican ensign, as if unaware of the great game of strategy which was being played; and we could distinctly make out, with our glasses, the long lines of defenses, which it had cost the enemy so much toil and anxiety to construct, but which were now become useless. Mexicalcingo was nearly abreast of us, and gave us as little concern as the Peñon. We were violating one of the exploded rules of European tactics, by leaving a fortified post in our rear; but in the words of General Worth, we were not in a condition to "entertain the question of the rear." We had passed the Rubicon, and it was, *aut Caesar, aut nihil*. Indeed, this whole doctrine of the "rear" seems to hold many clever intellects still, in a sort of mysterious thralldom. Where a country abounds everywhere in supplies, and where, consequently, an army can feed and clothe itself, independently of any "base," in military parlance, there is no rear. And then victories in front will always open the rear.

Moving on, we entered the village of San Gregorio, another of those twilight towns, situated in a dense olive grove. Here, although it was but ten o'clock in the day, we were overtaken by an order from the general-in-chief to halt. We should have reached San Augustin in four hours more, and thus, by a rapid march, have effected a complete surprise of the enemy. The cause of this order, was the appearance in our rear (General Twiggs was bringing up the rear), of a few thousand horse—between two and three—under Alvarez and Canalizo. As they approached General Twiggs, apparently with the design to cut off some portion of his baggage train, this officer caused his battery of light artillery to unlimber, and deliver a few shots, which

effectually dispersed them without any further trouble. We lost a day, however, by the operation. With the exception of this insignificant body of horsemen, there were no tidings of an enemy anywhere except in our front. We parked our wagons, and bivouacked our men beneath the wide-spreading branches of the olive trees, which were so thickly interlaced over-head, as to afford comparative shelter—many of our soldiers were still without tents—against the usual afternoon rains. The white tops of the wagons, contrasting prettily with the bright green foliage, the picketed horses of the cavalry, the camp-fires, around which the soldiers were busy with mess kettles and cooking apparatus, and the long stacks of arms, formed a curious picture in this quaint old olive grove, by the lonely and unfrequented lake side; and the careless laugh and the boisterous song of the Anglo-Saxon soldier, awakened strangely the sleeping echoes of San Gregorio! The general and his staff quartered with the Padre, whom we found a merry little fellow, and a sort of Caleb Quotem of the village. He was the alcalde; the military and civil governor; and as far as we could judge, bestowed the best of care upon his flock, many of the women and children of which, lived in the same house with him, and called him, the former, by the endearing appellation of father, and the latter, by the more significant one of *tio*—uncle. He wore a white linen roundabout, and broad-brim white hat, somewhat kinked and weather-beaten, and seemed to have an utter contempt for his more lugubrious clerical robes. He showed us his library, which consisted of his missal, a volume or two of polemics, and an almanac, and entered into a learned dispute with us, to prove that his beloved city of Mexico was the greatest city in the known world! When we told him that New York was twice as large, and contained over four hundred thousand inhabitants, he looked at us with the air of a man who had been puzzled in an argument, in which he had been sure of victory, and was evidently half inclined to believe that we were quizzing him. He wished to know whether we would protect religion, when we entered the great city, and was much relieved when we told him that this was one of the fundamental doctrines of our institutions. The merry little gentleman made us an excellent host; sent out agents and spies, hither and thither, through his wild domain, to gather up

eggs, and inspect the condition of the hen-roosts; and set the female portion of his household to work, to assist Sandy and Abram in preparing our dinner. He was constantly on the move, in the exercise of the functions of his various offices—now superintending the boiling of the coffee-pot, now receiving the report of an urchin whom he had dispatched on a foraging expedition, and now in his capacity of civil and military governor, laying before General Worth, some complaint he had received from a parishioner, of a soldier's having broken into his corn-field. Colonel Harney, in command of the cavalry brigade, consisting of eight hundred horse, reported for service in the division this evening. General Pillow encamped at Tulancingo, some four miles in our rear, and generals Quitman and Twiggs at Tetelco, some three miles farther.

August 17. Morning cloudy and cool, until eight o'clock, when the sun shone forth and gradually dispersed the wreaths of mist that had hung over, and obscured the lakes, and lighted up the beautiful scenery of the valley. We were in motion again, at an early hour. Soon after leaving San Gregorio, our road skirted the border of the lake, or rather marsh of Xochimilco; ledges of rock from the adjacent hills on our left, sometimes pushing so boldly into the marsh, as to dispute the passage with us. This morning we came upon the first obstruction in the road, made by the enemy, consisting of a ditch cut across it, and of some rocks which had been rolled down into it from the impending heights. Lieutenant Smith, with his company of pioneers, having been ordered to the front, set the matter to rights in about half an hour, and we continued our march.

We now began to have some skirmishing; the *rancheros*, or country militia, taking position among the rocks on the neighboring hills, and firing down upon us, *à la Mexicana*, from a safe distance for themselves, and a harmless one for us. To "brush away" these country gentlemen, we threw out Lieutenant-Colonel C. F. Smith's battalion of light infantry, as skirmishers. These picked troops ascended the steep acclivities, and bounded from rock to rock, with the eagerness of hunters in pursuit of game.

To carry out our hunting simile, they *opened* whenever they put up the chase, and it was not long before their animated

shouts, resounding like a shrill war-whoop among the hills, caused the enemy to start up from every nook and crevice, like so many of the men of Roderic Dhu; not to stand bristling in defiance however, like the brave Gaels, but—to show how clever a Mexican is, at *taking the back track*. I now understood, for the first time, what was meant, in military phrase, by “brushing away” an enemy, as if he were so many insects. Some three miles from San Gregorio, we left the marshy border of the lake, and emerged into the open country, where we found a firm, well-beaten road. Leaving the town of Xochimilco, near the head of the lake of the same name, on our right, we passed on to Tetelco, a small village situated on a height, some two miles before reaching San Augustin, and from which we had a full view of the city of Mexico, at about the distance of eight miles, and of the surrounding plain. Here we halted to rest the column, and reconnoiter. Captain Mason of the engineers, who afterward became so distinguished in the war, and who had joined us at Chalco just before marching, was pushed forward to examine San Augustin, preparatory to our taking possession of it. The gallant captain was absent about a couple of hours, having entered the town itself, and effectually reconnoitered all the grounds adjacent. There was no enemy to be seen. Our movement had taken him wholly by surprise. Indeed, we afterward learned from intercepted letters, that he was truly astonished to find that we had passed over a route, with artillery and baggage, which he had deemed scarcely practicable for infantry. The great problem of turning the Peñon and Mexicalcingo, which had given us so much anxiety in the beginning of the campaign, was now solved.

Immediately upon the return of Captain Mason, we put the division in motion, and in an hour afterward entered San Augustin, the long sought base of a new series of operations. We had the usual evening rain, but quarters were abundant, and we succeeded in getting the troops under shelter, before they suffered any serious inconvenience. When we turned into our beds that night, we had the satisfaction of reflecting, that the vexations of the campaign were at length at an end, and that henceforth, we should have nothing to do but beat the enemy; which was a sort of plain sailing, that our fellows liked much better than marching

and countermarching. General Pillow encamped at Xochimilco, where the general-in-chief also established his head-quarters. Generals Quitman and Twiggs encamped still further in the rear, at Tliahualco. At an early hour on the morning of the 18th, the general-in-chief had arrived in San Augustin, and his various divisions were concentrated in and near the village. On the 15th, the day on which General Worth marched from Chalco, General Santa Anna addressed an order to General Valencia, at Texcoco, of which the following is an extract:

"By repeated dispatches which have reached these head-quarters [Peñon] it is positively known, that the enemy has concentrated all his force at Chalco and its vicinity, leaving but one thousand men, with six pieces of artillery, at Ayotla, who are very soon to follow the movement of the rest of the army; and that the theater of war will undoubtedly be the line of San Antonio, since the enemy is about to commence his march for Tlalpam [San Augustin]. His excellency, the president *ad. in.*, and general-in-chief, deems it necessary, therefore, to strengthen that point, by concentrating thither the most select portions of the army, with a view to a general battle. He, therefore, desires me to direct your excellency, to countermarch the army under your command, to-morrow, to Guadalupe Hidalgo, whence you will proceed to Coyocan, to await further orders. General Alvarez has been directed to occupy Ayotla, as soon as the enemy vacates it, and to follow the enemy's rear to Chalco, which he will occupy in like manner, in order that we may have a respectable force in that quarter, with which to annoy him and to interrupt his communications with Puebla." It is seen by this order, that although we surprised the enemy, so far as to reach San Augustin before he could throw reinforcements thither, he was well aware of our contemplated movements, on the very day on which they were commenced. General Valencia made a rapid countermarch in obedience to his orders, and Santa Anna himself hastily withdrew from the Peñon, and took up his quarters, alternately at Churubusco, and San Antonio.

It is now time for us to take a rapid survey of the enemy's new line of defenses, and of the various positions of the opposing armies, before we can intelligibly describe the further movements

of the latter. San Augustin, the head-quarters of our army, stands at the head of the causeway to which it gives its name. This is the causeway before described, as leading into the great Acapulco highway to the Pacific ocean. It is a raised, broad, well-beaten track, leading still to the city, as old Bernal Dias described it in his day, in a straight line, "neither turning to the right hand nor to the left," and over a dead-level. The distance from San Augustin to the city is nine miles. About two miles and a half from the former, the enemy had placed his first fortification, in a village called San Antonio; two miles and a quarter farther on, he had placed a second, in a village called Churubusco; from Churubusco the road was open and free of obstruction to the city gates. Diverging from San Augustin to the left, there was another road leading over broken ground, in the direction of a village called Contreras, near which it debouched into a well-beaten track leading through the villages of San Angel, and Coyocan, either, or both, to the city of Mexico. On a height called *Padierna*, near the village of Contreras, the enemy had established a field-work, or intrenched camp, to obstruct our passage into this road. These were the only two roads leading from our base of operations into the city of Mexico, and the question presented in military science was, as to which of these should be taken. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 18th, General Worth's division was moved forward a couple of miles on the causeway, and took up its position in front of San Antonio, the men encamping on both sides of the road. The general himself established his head-quarters at a hacienda, called Coapa, a few hundred yards to the right. The general-in-chief now pushed forward reconnoitering parties, on both roads. These reconnoissances proved, 1. That the enemy was posted in great strength at San Antonio, in our front; his defenses consisting of an extensive field-work well supplied with heavy artillery. His right rested on the village and on an extensive field of lava, which had been poured down upon the plain in ages long past, by volcanoes now extinct, and which extended all the way to the mountains—thus occupying the space between the two roads, and forming a barrier against the approach of cavalry and artillery. His left extended continuously, to the boggy and marshy ground, partially

inundated, near the head of lake Xochimilco. To carry this work in front, it would be necessary to erect counter batteries, and storm with scaling-ladders and fascines—it being surrounded by a wet ditch. To turn its left flank, the reader sees, was impossible, from the nature of the ground. The bed of lava, by which its right flank was protected, although broken into deep chasms, and presenting jagged and pointed rocks of almost every conceivable shape, was practicable for infantry, but infantry alone. 2. That the road diverging to the left, from San Augustin, although exceedingly rough, might, with some labor, be made practicable for artillery, and that the enemy's intrenched camp at Padierna, which commanded this road, might be carried with the bayonet. While Major Smith—still an invalid, but enabled to get out on this occasion—and Captain Mason were making the reconnoissance of San Antonio, an unlucky shot from the enemy's battery killed poor Thornton of the dragoons, of whom I had seen much in Puebla, and of the fine qualities of whose mind and heart, I had formed a high opinion. It was somewhat singular that the first man who was killed in the valley of Mexico, was he whose defeat and capture, on the Rio Grande, had been the proximate cause of the war. Fitzwater, the faithful guide who had conducted Captain Kearney and myself to the Rio Frio, was stunned, and lost an eye by the same shot. Captain Kearney and Lieutenant Colonel Graham, who covered the reconnoissance made by Captain Lee in the other direction, had a handsome little skirmish with the enemy, in which they killed and wounded some five or six, and made prisoners of as many more.

After nightfall, I rode in with General Worth, to General Scott's head-quarters, where, after the reconnoissances of the day, the various chiefs, and officers were assembled to make their reports, and consult upon the *modus operandi*. The army of General Scott was full of talent; and the general had the judgment and tact to employ it all in the best manner possible. On the present occasion, beginning with the senior engineer, he called upon each officer, separately, to give an account of what he had done during the day; to state the number and force of the enemy, at the particular point reconnoitered by him, the manner of approaching this point, etc. In this way, he not only elicited the informa-



tion, but the opinions of his various subordinates, in order that he might the more intelligently combine the whole, and draw his own conclusions. He rarely made an examination of the enemy's position, in person, but with perfect confidence was content to see and hear, with the eyes and ears of his subordinates. Ably sustained as he was, by active and zealous young men, of fine capacities and thorough military educations, I attribute much of the success which attended the campaign, to this wise policy. He was the chief administrator, as it were, of his great army. He fed it, clothed it, kept it together, directed its general movements, but had the good sense to leave movements of a subordinate character to his generals of division, chiefs of brigade, etc. Among the most prominent of the engineers, were Captain Lee, and Captain Mason—the former serving at General Scott's head-quarters, and the latter at those of General Worth. The services of Captain Lee were invaluable to his chief. Endowed with a mind which has no superior in his corps, and possessing great energy of character, he examined, counseled, and advised, with a judgment, tact, and discretion worthy of all praise. His talent for topography was peculiar, and he seemed to receive impressions intuitively, which it cost other men much labor to acquire.—Mason, though a very young man, was scarcely, if at all, his inferior in this respect, and he early acquired the esteem and regard of General Worth. On the occasion of which I am speaking, there were two plans presented for the consideration of the general-in-chief, by these accomplished engineers. Captain Lee was of opinion, that the proper manner of approaching the capital, was by the road diverging to the left, and leading through San Angel, etc. By this movement, we should have but a single obstacle to encounter, the fortified post of *Padierna*, which he was sanguine of carrying without much loss. Captain Mason, on the other hand, proposed that we should open the main road to Mexico, by carrying San Antonio with the bayonet, by a flank movement over the *pedregal*, or bed of lava, directed against its right. Both of these opinions were favorably received, and both of them partially acted upon. General Worth and myself returned to our camp, at Coapa, about eleven o'clock, and in the stillness of the night, we could hear distinctly the sounds of mirth and revelry in

the enemy's lines. What with the noise of trumpets, drums, and Indian shouts, Bedlam seemed to have been let loose. They were evidently holding a grand *fandango*, in honor of something or another—perhaps because of our halt in their front, for the purpose of reconnoitering, which they construed into a check; especially as they had fired a few shot at us in the morning, which we had not returned. The contrast of this noisy rout, with the silent discipline that appeared in the veteran ranks of the first division, struck me with peculiar force, as we rode along the dusky causeway, flanked by the smouldering camp-fires, and the sleeping forms, wrapped in their blankets, of our soldiery. The only sounds of life that met the ear, were the measured tread of the sentinel, and his challenge as we approached, of "*Who comes there?*"

After a night of rain, the morning of the 19th dawned in a cloudless sky, and the sun rose in his usual splendor, to light up the lovely valley of Mexico, in which the shock of contending armies was so soon to be felt. General Scott, in accordance with the recommendation of Captain Lee, dispatched General Pillow, supported by General Twiggs, to open the road in the direction of Contreras and San Angel. The distance from San Augustin to *Padierna*, the enemy's intrenched camp, is a little over three miles. When our troops had proceeded about half this distance, they were opposed by the advance corps of the enemy, who, however, fell back to their intrenchments, after a little skirmishing. Intervening between our column and these intrenchments, there was a field of lava—the same as described at San Antonio—sloping down toward a ravine; the ravine running along the base and in front of the works. A front attack upon these works, was therefore next to impossible, in consequence of the difficulties of the ground. About two o'clock, P. M., two batteries of light artillery, and howitzers, commanded respectively by Captain Magruder, and Lieutenant Callender, were nevertheless advanced as near to the front of the enemy's works, as the lava would permit, when a mutual cannonade ensued, which lasted the remainder of the afternoon: for what purpose, no one can conceive. As yet there was no plan of attack formed—indeed there could be none formed, until the ground was reconnoitered, which had not yet been done. The enemy had

twenty-two pieces of heavy artillery, in battery, behind breast-works and in embrasure; it was therefore the height of folly to attempt to counter-batter such an armament, with light field-pieces, and howitzers, entirely uncovered. Nay, more, it was criminal, as it subjected our batteries to be cut to pieces (as they, in fact, were), and entailed upon us a loss of many valuable officers and men, who could ill be spared, in the great disparity existing between ourselves and the enemy. From the *azotea* of General Worth's head-quarters, we listened to the constant roar of artillery and musketry, and watched the smoke and flash of the battle with our glasses—we were four miles distant—with great anxiety, all the afternoon. We could see no apparent change in the positions of the two parties; and from this argued, that generals Pillow and Twiggs, had received a serious check by overwhelming numbers. Great was our relief, when about an hour after dark, an orderly dashed into our camp, and brought us intelligence of the true state of facts, as above related. In the meantime, General Persifer F. Smith, commanding the 2d brigade of Twiggs' division, who had been sent forward under a hot fire, to support Magruder's and Callender's batteries, seeing with the eye of a soldier, the nature of the enemy's position, and that a front attack was out of the question, determined to try one of his flanks. Being isolated from his division, and having no ready means of communication with it, he undertook this movement on his own responsibility; reconnoitered the ground, with the assistance of Lee and his engineers, and planned and carried out the attack, which resulted in the glorious victory of *Padierna*—known more generally as that of *Contreras*—without let or hindrance, as without suggestion from the commander-in-chief, or generals Pillow or Twiggs. These facts, so honorable to the gallantry and military science of this distinguished officer, are, perhaps, not generally understood by the people of the United States.

General Smith, selecting the enemy's left flank as the object of his movement, at once commenced his march—making a long circuit over the lava—in that direction. His two principal objects in selecting this flank were: 1st, to throw himself between the enemy and his reinforcements; and, 2dly, to cut off the enemy's

retreat toward the city of Mexico, after his works should be carried.

So far as the first of these objects was concerned—to-wit: the interposing some force between the enemy's intrenched position, and the city, to prevent him from receiving reinforcements—General Pillow had conceived the same idea, as General Smith, and had dispatched General Cadwallader, to effect a lodgment in the village of Contreras, with this view. Late in the afternoon, General Scott rode out as near the field of operations, as the bed of lava would permit, and conceiving, or concurring in the idea of generals Smith and Pillow, dispatched Colonel Morgan, of the 15th regiment of infantry, to effect the same object; but he had been anticipated by both these officers, and Colonel Morgan, upon his arrival in the village, found it already in the possession of our troops. I am thus particular in describing all these movements, as I would not willingly do injustice to any of the parties interested in them. Soon after General Smith's arrival in the village, Colonel Riley's brigade, which had been skirmishing with some detachments of the enemy, came up and reported to him. It was now after sunset, and nothing more could be accomplished that night.

An hour or two afterward, and when General Smith's plans for an attack on the enemy's intrenched camp, on the following morning at daylight, had all been arranged, General Shields, in command of the New York and South Carolina regiments, arrived on the ground. General Smith, acting on the belief that he was the senior of this officer—they were both brigadiers—directed him to hold the village of Contreras, for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the enemy, after his camp should be carried, in the coming assault; or to operate on the flank of his reserve, should he change front, and attack him (General Smith), while moving toward *Padierna*. General Shields, perceiving General Smith's mistake, with regard to his rank, and being unwilling to deprive this officer of the credit of carrying out the arrangements he had already so ably made, with great tact and delicacy, forbore to undeceive him, and gallantly executed the part assigned him! A victory over the egotism of our nature, which his

friends should cherish more, than a thousand victories on the battle-field.

Let us now take a brief review, of the movements of the enemy up to this point. On the day of our march from Chalco, the reader has seen, that General Valencia was directed to counter-march his division from Tezcoco, and take post at Coyocan. He was afterward moved out as far as San Angel, a village about two miles and a half from Contreras. Upon reconnoitering this village, and the various paths leading to it, by way of Padierna, Contreras, etc.—there were four of these paths, one of them practicable for artillery—he reported to General Santa Anna—then at Churubusco—that the post was not defensible, without fortifications, which there was not time to erect, and requested permission to fall back upon some other *point d'appui*. This was on the 17th, before all our forces had reached San Augustin. General Santa Anna replied to him, on the same day, as follows. It is the minister of war who writes: “Having laid before the president, your note of to-day, in which you assign reasons why you should retire from the post you now occupy, I have been ordered to reply to you, as I now have the honor of doing, that there being in Tlalpam [San Augustin] only the vanguard of the enemy’s army [Worth’s division], consisting of two thousand five hundred men, with four pieces of light artillery, and seventy-five wagons, it is not likely he will undertake to march upon San Angel, to-morrow, both because of the smallness of the force, which is not more than about half your own, and because it would be necessary to repair the road, somewhat, to render it practicable for wagons.—Beside, we do not know but that, to save himself this trouble, he may attempt to force the pass of San Antonio. For these reasons, the president is of opinion, that there is no necessity for abandoning San Angel, in such haste; and without this necessity, it would not be very honorable to do so. His excellency, therefore, desires that you remain where you are, until it is positively known that the enemy intends to take that route. But if, contrary to expectation, the aforesaid vanguard should undertake this movement, to-morrow, in that case, and only in that case, you may fall back upon Tacubaya—taking care to assure yourself that the enemy has really put himself *en route*; for which purpose, you should

push your spies, even into Tlalpam, itself." On the next day, the 18th, the day on which Worth's division moved to take a position in front of San Antonio, and Lee commenced his reconnoissance of the San Angel road, the minister of war writes to General Valencia, from San Antonio, the head-quarters of General Santa Anna, as follows :

"The general-in-chief directs me to say to your excellency, that the enemy having now (three o'clock, P. M.) taken up a position on our left with a part of his forces [alluding to Worth's movement], it is clear, that to-morrow, at the latest, he will undertake the attack of this fortification, although it appears that there is a movement going on at the same time, on our right [alluding to Lee's reconnoissances, covered by Graham and Kearney]. His excellency, therefore, directs that at daylight, to-morrow morning, you will fall back, with the forces under your command, to Coyocan, sending forward your artillery to the fort of Churubusco, and the *tête de pont*, at that place." But General Valencia, instead of obeying this order—which would have opened to us an unobstructed passage to the city of Mexico, General Worth's movement having effectually deceived Santa Anna as to our intentions—had changed his mind as to the defensibility of the post he occupied, and moving out to the hill of Padierna, had thrown up the field-work, which we have seen, and which General Smith was about to assault. Declining to obey the order to fall back upon Coyocan, he wrote his general-in-chief a reply, of which the following is an extract : "I should like much to be able to obey this order, but in view of present circumstances, my conscience as a military man, and my patriotism will not permit me. I believe the national cause would be lost, if I should abandon these positions, and the road leading from San Augustin through Padierna, to this point [he is writing from San Angel]. To me it is as clear as the light of day; that the enemy will undertake his attack, if not to-morrow, the day after; that he designs to make two attacks, at the same time—the one true, and the other false—and that should he find, at the commencement of his movement, one of the points of attack abandoned, as this, for instance, he will pass by this route, with all his forces, and thus be enabled to assail our flank, and turn our rear. Or if he prefer it, he may pass

on, without obstruction, to the city of Mexico." In the above extract, I have given the *gist*, rather than the precise words, of General Valencia's reasoning, which was unquestionably sound, and based upon a more correct appreciation of our intended movement than that of his chief. This could not excuse his disobedience, however.

I am thus particular in describing the movements of the enemy, as General Santa Anna, afterward, laid the whole blame of his discomfiture on his disobedient general. This letter of General Valencia was written on the 18th. On the 19th, occurred the cannonade between him and General Pillow, already described, and the movements of Smith, Shields, Cadwallader and Riley. As the reader has perceived, there was no battle fought, unless our ill-advised cannonade be regarded as one; but only some indecisive skirmishing, as the various brigadiers were moving to take up their positions, preparatory to the assault of the following morning. I have elsewhere remarked, in these pages, that the Mexicans always beat us, in their dispatches, before the fighting came on. So it was on this occasion. General Valencia, in his dispatch to General Santa Anna, dated at eight o'clock, on the evening of the 19th, informed his chief, that he had gained a complete victory, having put the whole of our forces to shameful flight. The opening words of this celebrated dispatch are: "After a desperate combat with all the Anglo-American forces, I have the high honor of informing your excellency, that I have put them to shameful flight, with the valiant army which I have the honor to command," etc. On the strength of this victory he was guilty of the absurdity of so far transcending his authority, as to make a large batch of promotions, including generals of division! In announcing this promotion to General Santa Anna, he says: "The honor of the republic, most excellent sir, was intrusted to proper hands, when it was confided to the brave officers under my command, and I have, therefore, had no difficulty in conferring upon all the generals, chiefs, and officers who participated in this glorious battle, the several promotions to which they are entitled." As an excuse for this conduct of General Valencia, it has been said that he was drunk, at the time, which is quite probable, as he was a man of notoriously intemperate habits. General Santa Anna, it

seems, was better informed as to the true state of things. Upon hearing the cannonade, he had marched with six thousand men, and five pieces of artillery, to reinforce General Valencia, but was not able to effect a junction in consequence of the difficulties of the ground, and the timely precautions generals Pillow and Smith had taken to occupy the village of Contreras; which latter intervened, as has been remarked, between himself and General Valencia's position. The usual evening rains coming on, he retired to San Angel, to put his men under shelter; and notwithstanding the receipt of General Valencia's bulletin announcing a glorious victory, sent an aid-de-camp to this officer, directing him, again, in the most positive manner, to withdraw from his position, and fall back upon San Angel. But this order, like the first, was disobeyed.

The reader now understands the positions of both armies. We have General Smith, in the village of Contreras, with generals Shields, Cadwallader and Riley, each with his respective brigade, and Major Dimick commanding, for the time being, Smith's own brigade, in all about 3300 strong; but without cavalry or artillery. General Valencia was posted on the hill of Padierna, with about six thousand men, and there were ten or twelve thousand more, within supporting distance. General Smith, in reviewing the critical position in which he was thus placed, between two separate corps of the enemy, either of which was his superior in numbers, saw at once, that the most energetic action was required of him. He says in his dispatch, "I therefore directed an attack on the works of Contreras [Padierna], by turning their rear before day; and Captain Lee, of the engineers, offered to return to General Scott (a most difficult task)—[in consequence of the darkness, and intricacy of the way]—and inform him of our position, and that I would march out by three o'clock, A. M., so that any diversion that he could make in our favor from that side, might be prepared accordingly." Captain Lee reached General Scott's headquarters, in San Augustin, at a late hour in the night; informed him of the various movements of the day; of the position of General Smith, and his intended plan of attack, and of this officer's request that a diversion might be made in his favor. This diversion was intrusted to my friend, Ransom, of the 9th, having with him,



beside his own regiment, some companies of the 3d, 12th and Rifles. A word more remains to be said of the topography, before General Smith puts his column in motion. It has been remarked that a ravine ran in front of General Valencia's camp. A branch of the same ravine extended, also, along the left flank, and toward the rear of the camp. It was up this latter ravine that General Smith designed to march. Lieutenants Tower and Beauregard, of the engineers, and Lieutenant Brooks, aid to General Twiggs, had closely reconnoitered the ground during the night, and were to conduct the different brigades. At precisely three o'clock, on the morning of the 20th, the troops were put in motion. The path was very narrow and rocky; it had rained all night—the men having slept on their arms, in the mud, and without fire—and was still raining, and the night was so dark, that General Smith, to prevent his rear files from going astray, was obliged to order the men to keep within *touch* of each other. The order of march was as follows: First, Colonel Riley's brigade; next, General Cadwallader's, and lastly, General Smith's own brigade, under Major Dimick. The march was so tedious, owing to the darkness of the night, and the badness of the road, that it was daylight before the head of Cadwallader's brigade filed out of the village, into the path which descends into the ravine. Having followed up the ravine to a point whence it seemed possible to approach the work, General Smith halted his column, and closed up the rear ranks—the march having been by a flank, the column was necessarily very much spread. The veteran Colonel Riley, who was to be the first to give the assault, here examined his arms, and caused such of them as were wet to be re-loaded. He then moved on, and turning to his left, in the direction of the rear of the camp, left the ravine, and ascended the hill on which the camp was placed; but still sheltered from its fire by a slight swell in the ground. Here, having halted for a few moments to reform his ranks, he moved forward upon the swell, and presented himself in full view of the enemy. He was immediately opened upon by a fire of artillery and musketry, not only from the work, but from a force on his right flank. Throwing out his first two divisions as skirmishers, to protect his flanks, he now rushed headlong into the work, which he soon cleared with the bayonet and clubbed mus-

ket. The engineer company, under Lieutenant Smith, and the Rifles, having in the meantime been thrown across the ravine, under the brow of the slope, swept it, from this position, in front; and then inclining to the left, joined in the attack on the troops outside the left flank of the fort. Ransom (who, as we have seen, had been detached to cause a diversion in favor of the main attack), coming up at the same moment, poured into the work, and upon the fugitives, a deadly fire of musketry. Cadwallader moved on to the support of Riley, following the same route that had been taken by the latter. Major Dimick had been ordered to follow Cadwallader, in turn; but when he came abreast of the work, General Smith seeing his flank threatened by a large body of the enemy, faced him in that direction, and moved him forward to the attack in line. The attack was made in fine style, and the rout soon became complete. The cavalry, which at first made a stand, was put to flight by the bayonet, and trampling underfoot their own infantry, made a precipitate retreat. General Shields' brigade, under his skillful management, not only protected in a great measure, the movement of Smith, but intercepted great numbers of the fugitives, who were either cut down under the sure fire of the South Carolina rifles, or were made prisoners. In short, without pursuing details, it is sufficient to state, that seven hundred of the enemy were killed in this battle, and fifteen hundred made prisoners; twenty-two pieces of artillery were found in the fort, and a large number of small arms; seven hundred pack-mules, etc., etc., were captured. Thus was fought, by a gallant son of Louisiana, the first brilliant battle in the valley of Mexico; a battle which opened to us the whole road to the capital, and placed the success of our campaign beyond doubt.

At the conclusion of the battle General Valencia was nowhere to be found! He had probably been sleeping off the effects of the previous night's debauch, when he was aroused by the crack of Riley's rifles, and the frightful yells of his men; and being half stupefied, and bewildered, made a hasty retreat, regardless of everything but life. He made his way to Toluca, as was afterward known, and disappeared from the theater of the war. His second in command, General Salas, who had been president *ad. in.*, of the republic, wrote the dispatch on the occasion, which, as it

throws some light on the enemy's proceedings during the battle, I transcribe :

*"To the minister of war and marine.*—On the 19th, at about twelve or one o'clock, P. M., the enemy presented himself in the attitude of attacking this position, on the heights of Contreras [Padierna]. We, at once opened upon him, in succession, a vigorous fire of artillery and musketry, as he presented himself at the various points occupied by our troops, and succeeded in holding him in check, until night put an end to the contest. In this engagement, all classes of the army gave evidence of their courage, and of the decision with which they were willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of our nationality. But on the morning of the 20th, thanks to the bad position which we occupied, and the carelessness with which the movements of the enemy, made with a view of enveloping us, were regarded, we were routed in all directions by more than six thousand men—our own numbers amounting to three thousand infantry, cut off from all succor. As soon as I observed the dispersion of our forces, I made every effort to rally them, shouting *victory for Mexico!* and ordering the bugles to sound the charge. I succeeded in halting them for a moment, when I ordered General Torrejon to charge with his corps; but this officer, instead of obeying my order, betook himself cowardly to flight; the cavalry following his example, trampling under foot the infantry, and completing the general disorder. It would appear ridiculous to present recommendations of those who were present in a lost battle; but nevertheless, I feel obliged to speak favorably of the officers generally, who made great exertions to rally their troops, and withstand the attack of the enemy. In doing this, many of them were made prisoners. His excellency, the general-in-chief, Don Gabriel Valencia, disappeared from among us, at the commencement of the battle, and as I am ignorant of his abiding-place, I have deemed it my duty to make you this report," etc. *Et tu Brute!* General Salas, who makes this report, had condescended, the night before, to receive from the hand of his now missing general, the grade of general of division! Being second in command, one would think he might himself have taken some precautions against being "enveloped," while his

chief and patron was at his orgies at the supper-table. General Torrejon was another of Valencia's *élèves*—he had been made general of brigade. The circumstances attending this battle, give us considerable insight into the *morale* and organization of the Mexican army. All the chiefs were the secret, if not open enemies, of each other. In the various revolutions of the country, they had been more or less in hostile array, and although they were now compelled to dissemble their hatred, and act together in the common defense, upon the first reverse, they turned against each other, and each endeavored to fasten upon his neighbor, the odium of the disgrace. Generals Santa Anna and Valencia first exchange private letters, in which the most endearing expressions are introduced. General Valencia then seeing an opportunity, as he thinks, to push his fortunes, to the disadvantage of his friend and chief, disobeys his orders, and intrenches himself at Padierna. He and General Salas are now intimate, and he makes the latter a general of division. Salas, although perhaps as culpable as Valencia, takes the first opportunity to hold up his friend and patron to ridicule; and in turn is disobeyed by Torrejon, his gallant *confrère* in the victory of the preceding day! No wonder we beat such generals. General Santa Anna threw the whole blame of his subsequent defeat at Churubusco, upon General Valencia; but manifestly without reason, as Padierna was a very proper point to be defended; and if it had been reconnoitered in time, and suitable batteries constructed, might have held us in check, and put us to serious inconvenience. And then, even on the supposition that Valencia had obeyed his orders, and left an important road to the capital open to us, without the necessity of our fighting a battle to open it, how could we have been prejudiced? I have said that General Smith fought and won this battle, without suggestion or direction. General Twiggs, to whose division he belonged, gives him this credit, with great magnanimity, in his report. He says, "For the particulars of this affair, I would respectfully refer the general-in-chief, to the reports of General Smith and Colonel Riley, to whom, and to the other officers engaged, is due all the credit that attaches. I was unable, for the reason given above [a lame foot] to come up to my divi-

sion, until the affair was over, and the road opened for my horse." The merit of making some of the preliminary dispositions for this battle, was afterward disputed by General Scott and General Pillow, before a court of inquiry; but if we except the general order given by both those generals to their subordinates, to endeavor to reach the San Angel road, there seems to be no foundation for the claim of either.

## CHAPTER XIX.

WORTH'S encampment before San Antonio—Storming of this place—March of the army upon Churubusco—Worth commands the right of attack—The battle of Churubusco—The storming of the *tête de pont*, and the fall of San Pablo—Consequent defeat and rout of the enemy—Gathering together the wounded, and burial of the dead—March of Scott and Worth upon Tacubaya—The policy of fighting the battle of Churubusco considered, as also our failure to enter the city of Mexico—Armistice.

WHILE the events, described in the last chapter, were transpiring at Contreras, General Worth's division was encamped before San Antonio. The enemy, finding us thus inactive, had during the 19th thrown a few shells at us, and now and then sent a ball whizzing through the walls of the hacienda, knocking the white-wash and plaster about our heads, without, however, doing us any damage. Our ears were regaled nearly the whole night by the songs and shouts of merriment, and the beating of drums, and sounds of musical instruments, in the enemy's line. They were celebrating General *Valencia's* victory! Worth's veterans, who had been chafing and fretting at this inaction, had been drawn up under arms nearly all day, expecting a momentary summons to Contreras, but none came; and at nightfall they lay down in and on the sides of the road, and covering themselves with their wet blankets, endeavored to snatch a few moments of repose, to nerve themselves for the bloody events, which they foresaw, were to ensue on the morrow. It was a terrible night; the black and lowering clouds poured down torrents of rain, and the mimic roar and flash of the battle, which had been raging all day, were succeeded by the awful thunder and lightnings of the heavens. Notwithstanding this war of the elements, our fellows, worn out with fatigue and watching, slept soundly, perhaps dreaming of their far-off homes, and the comforts of their firesides. Alas! before sunset the next day, many of them slept that sleep from which the trump of the archangel alone will awaken them. I

have before remarked the exceeding regularity of these rains, and the certainty with which a night of storm and darkness is followed by a morning of sunshine. It was so on this occasion; and as the glorious orb of day lifted himself above the horizon, not a cloud or a wreath of vapor was to be seen in any direction. The magnificent valley, which had charmed and led Cortez on to conquest, now wreathed in smiles, and looked down upon by its peerless volcanoes, whose snow-clad summits dazzled the vision as they glistened in the morning sun, equally beckoned us on to fulfill our destiny. Like our great predecessor, whose descendants we had come to destroy, we were equally the children of fate, rolling up that dark curtain of the future, behind which an All-wise Providence has concealed from our feeble vision his mysterious designs. But let us to work. General Worth, who up to the period of Smith's victory, had been ordered to mask and threaten San Antonio, but not to attack it, was now directed to carry it, if possible, and then act as circumstances should require; it being General Scott's intention to move on to the assault of Churubusco with his whole army—less Quitman's brigade, which he had ordered to remain as a garrison in San Augustin, for the protection of the general *dépôt*. San Antonio has been before described as being a strong work thrown across the road, and accessible only on its right flank. It was, therefore, determined to carry it by sweeping around this flank, and assaulting it in the rear. For this purpose, Clarke's brigade, under the guidance of Captain Mason and Lieutenant Hardcastle, engineers, was deployed over the field of lava, on our left. The general ordered me to dismount and accompany the engineers, which gave me the opportunity of witnessing what I describe. Passing through a small thicket of thorn and briers, that skirted the road, we soon entered upon the field of lava, over which it was impossible for any one but a footman to pass. I cannot better describe this *pedregal*, than by comparing it to a sea, which having been lashed into fury by a tempest, had been suddenly transformed, by the wand of an enchanter, into stone. We picked our way, like so many chamois hunters, over and between these stony billows, and leaped from crest to crest, as a fissure would present itself. The reader will readily perceive that the inequality of the surface

protected us from the fire of artillery; and as a skirmishing ground for infantry, it was the best I ever saw. Clarke's brigade could have held it against the Mexican army. Soon after we commenced our march, the 4th infantry, under the guidance of Mackall—assistant adjutant-general—was deployed also to the left, and ordered to choose a route between the one we were pursuing and the road, either to sustain our movement, or, if opportunity offered, to rush upon one of the batteries. The enemy, perceiving our movement, sent out a few skirmishers to check us, if possible, and at the same time—influenced, no doubt, by the fall of Contreras, which had occurred a few hours before—commenced an evacuation of his works. Brushing away the skirmishers, we hurried forward, and having collected together a couple of companies—Merrill's and McPhail's—made a dash for the road, in time to cut the enemy's retreating column in two; driving General Bravo, with four pieces of light artillery, over the meadows, in the direction of Dolores, while the remainder made the best of its way to Churubusco.

Nothing could exceed the scene of confusion, which was here witnessed. The magnificent causeway, lined on both sides by rows of stately shade trees, was filled, as far as the eye could reach, with masses of the flying enemy—three thousand. Cavalry, artillery, and infantry were all rushing forward pell-mell, amid the shouts of the officers, as they gave their confused and hurried orders, the rumbling of artillery and baggage-wagons, as the horses were whipped up to their full speed, the yells of teamsters and arrieros, and the shrieks of the wounded and dying, as they were tumbled from their saddles by the unerring aim of our muskets. We made a great many prisoners, many of whom threw themselves at our feet, in the utmost alarm and consternation. I happened to witness an amusing scene, just as I came out upon the road. I saw lying prostrate, under one of the shade trees, a remarkably bulky-looking figure, in the uniform of a Mexican general, and a soldier of one of our companies standing by him. Supposing the officer to have been killed, I inquired of the soldier if this were the fact. "Oh, no, sir," said he, "he is only a little out of wind, being a fat man; I have just run him down." The general afterward informed me, that in the hurry of the retreat,



his aid-de-camp had run off with his horse, and that this was the cause of his being captured! A thing which, I suppose, could only occur in Mexico.

General Worth, as soon as he perceived that Clarke had opened his fire, directed Garland to advance rapidly in column, and attempt a direct assault, previously detaching a company in advance to draw the enemy's fire, and discover the magnitude of his batteries in that quarter; but it appeared that the guns at that point had been hastily withdrawn in the hope of getting them away. Garland's column, therefore, accompanied by Duncan's battery, passed into and through the work without opposition. Some six hundred yards beyond the work, our two brigades were reunited, and we pushed on in pursuit of the enemy toward Churubusco, not stopping to attend to the details of securing prisoners, or paying much attention to General Bravo and his flying masses, who were running in the wrong direction for us.

Let us now pause a moment, to look at the works and the nature of the ground before us, and to cast a rapid glance at the movements of the other divisions of the army, for the great battle of this eventful day—the battle of Churubusco, in which all the forces on both sides were engaged—is still to be fought; the battles of Contreras and San Antonio having been mere preludes. It has been said that the village of Churubusco was about two miles and a quarter from San Antonio, by the route we were pursuing—the great causeway of San Augustin leading to Mexico. From Padierna or Contreras, it is three miles to San Angel; from San Angel to Coyocan, it is one mile and three quarters, and from Coyocan to Churubusco, it is one mile. This last route was the one taken by General Scott, and the remaining divisions of the army. Both these approaches were strongly defended; the greatest attention having been paid, as a matter of course, to the defenses of the principal route, which, as the reader sees, was the one taken by Worth. Just in the rear of the scattering hamlets, known as the village of Churubusco, there was a wide and deep canal, cutting the causeway and continuing over the plain perpendicularly to the road, a long distance to the left (enemy's left). This canal was bridged at its intersection with the causeway; and at the hither end, or head of this bridge, there was

constructed a field-work, known in military nomenclature, as a *tête de pont*. This work had been planned and constructed in the most scientific manner (Mora y Villamil, Robles, and other Mexican engineers, having deservedly a very high reputation for skill in their art), was regularly bastioned and curtained, and surrounded in every part, except at the *gorge*, by a formidable wet ditch. It commanded the main approach by the causeway, and that also, by its left flank. There were four guns in this work; two in embrasure, bearing in front, and two—one in embrasure, and one *en barbette*—bearing on its left flank. Dikes, extending along the banks of the canal, and of sufficient elevation to afford protection for infantry, had been constructed in ages gone by to guard against inundations. These, for the distance of a mile and more, to the left of the *tête de pont*, were now converted into ramparts, and occupied by dense masses of infantry. The ground, in front of this murderous dike, was occupied by corn-fields (the corn six feet high and more, and waving its green leaves and silken tassels most invitingly, but treacherously, in the gentle breeze that was blowing) and straggling fruit, and other trees. The plowed ground, though not miry, was still heavy, and a net-work of cross ditches and dikes, obstructed our rapid approach. When it is recollected that we were maneuvering on a dead-level, in front of these formidable defenses, and entirely without protection, the reader will have an idea of the bloody work which General Worth had before him. To the right of the *tête de pont*, about three hundred yards from it, and somewhat in advance of it, on the road debouching into the causeway from Coyocan, was another fortified position, commanding the approach from that direction. This work—the fortification of San Pablo—consisted of a stone church, that served as a sort of citadel, and two walls, one within the other. The outer wall constituted a regular field-work, was pierced with embrasures, and was defended by three pieces of artillery. This work was open on the rear and on the right flank—that portion of it not having been completed. The flat roof of the church and the steeple, afforded excellent positions for marksmen, who could see every one who approached while they were themselves covered by parapets and walls. The nature of the ground on the right was pretty much such as it has been described

on the left. The reader thus sees the work which General Scott has before him.

Beside the seven pieces of artillery in the two fortified positions, the enemy had various other batteries of movable pieces on the ground. His troops, all told, amounted to about twenty-five thousand men; long lines of infantry and cavalry being drawn up on the causeway, and many detachments occupying houses—every house being in itself a fortification—on both sides of the road, and the cross dikes that cut up the fields. There is one more remark necessary to give the reader a correct view of the whole ground, as a military position. The *tête de pont* was situated, as I have said, on the left-rear of San Pablo (see map). It was also considerably elevated above it, and commanded it with its guns; it was, therefore, the *key* to the whole position. When carried, San Pablo fell, as a matter of course; and the way being opened to the rear of the dikes, perpendicular to the road, the enemy's infantry was uncovered, and the battle gained. I claim for General Worth the merit of having won this battle; with the gallant and able assistance, to be sure, of the other divisions of the army, but which divisions, from their positions, were necessarily reduced to the necessity of playing a subordinate part. I shall, of course, offend by this statement, the egotism of the less liberal or less enlightened of the other divisions, but I appeal fearlessly to the facts, and to the reasoning of the unprejudiced reader, upon those facts. The good fortune which fell to the lot of the 1st division, on this occasion, was not by any pre-arrangement—it was purely one of the chances of war. Nor is it meant to arrogate to this division, or to its commander, any superiority over the other divisions or other commanders of the army. There was no plan of battle, other than such as was formed on the spot, and in the heat of pursuit, by the commanders themselves. And this, for a very simple reason, viz: that there had been no reconnaissance of the enemy's position and defenses; and without a knowledge of the ground, neither General Scott, nor any other military man, could have given an intelligent or intelligible order in regard to it. It must be presumed, too, as a matter of course, that if General Scott could have foreseen the paramount importance of Worth's operations, he would have assumed control of

these operations himself, by moving upon Worth's line, instead of upon the line from Padierna. As it was, the army was divided into two great divisions or wings, each isolated from the other, and moving by convergent roads upon the same object—the right division or wing being commanded by Worth, and the left by Scott. Except that they both had the same object in view, these two wings, so far as there was any interchange of orders and movements, were essentially two different armies.

But let us move on to the attack. We left Worth's division in hot pursuit of the enemy, whom he had routed at San Antonio, and who was falling back, in a disorderly retreat, upon Churubusco. A retreating foe, with balls and bayonets at his back, always flies faster than a pursuing one. We overtook but few of these fugitives, therefore. Beside, General Worth, knowing well that there was another battle in advance of him, and the ground being new to him, checked the pursuit, after the first few minutes of excitement, and moved forward, coolly, with his division well in hand. As we advanced, first the enemy's artillery from the *tête de pont*, which enfiladed the road, and then his musketry, opened upon us. General Scott had got into action, on the enemy's right, a short time before us, owing to our delay at San Antonio; and now a tremendous roar of artillery and small arms was heard from one end to the other of the enemy's line, extending more than a mile. Like old Bernal Diaz, I seem to hear this crash of battle still. The stunning explosions of the cannon, at rapid intervals, were accompanied by an unceasing and a sharper, and if possible, more startling rattle of musketry. The day, as I have before remarked, was perfectly clear, but the smoke, as it arose over the heads of the combatants, formed a dense canopy, that partially obscured the sun, and reflected back, as is sometimes seen with regard to the lightning in a thunder-storm, the quick and vivid flashes of the various fire-arms. The scene was grand beyond description; there was now scarcely a breath of air stirring; and while the stillness of the valley was broken by the dire thunders above described, nature, in striking contrast to the bloody work which was going on, seemed only to smile; and presented to the eye of the beholder, her green fruit trees, and tall grain bowing low with refreshing plenty.

Worth, halting a moment for reconnoissance, and casting his eagle eye rapidly over the field, with that quickness of combination and military reasoning, for which he was so justly celebrated, saw at once the true points of attack, and marshaled and moved forward his forces accordingly. Garland's brigade was thrown out promptly to the right of, and directed to move in line (of columns) obliquely to the road, so as to strike in its advance, and deployment, the enemy's line (of infantry) at a like angle—Duncan's light battery moving on the right. Clarke's brigade—with the exception of the 6th infantry—was ordered to move also to the right, and by a flank parallel to the road, while the 6th infantry was directed to move boldly up the road (taking shelter along its sides as far as possible), and storm the *tête de pont* in front. These able combinations were formed in less time than I have been describing them, and the movements were as rapidly put in execution. The field through which Garland and Clarke were moving, was filled, as the reader has seen, with standing corn, which, while it afforded no protection to our troops, offered great advantages to the enemy for concealment. We suffered, therefore, terribly for a while, until we had driven the enemy's advance from this favorable position upon the dikes in the rear. When the battle was over, we counted one hundred dead bodies of our brave fellows lying in this corn-field, within the space of an acre! It was soon ascertained that Duncan's battery, which would have been of infinite service to Garland, could not be got over the ground, by reason of the cross-dikes, before described. It was therefore, ordered to fall back, and be held in reserve until opportunity should occur for its services, which was not long in presenting itself. The 6th infantry moved forward with great steadiness, to assault the field-work in front, as it had been directed, but was met by so destructive a fire, ripping and cutting its ranks in pieces, that it was forced to recoil and fall back; which, however, was done with the coolness of a parade.

Meanwhile, Clarke, with the remainder of his brigade, more favorably situated, but still under a galling and destructive fire, from the two pieces of artillery described as commanding the approach on the flank, and from musketry, dashed past at "double quick," the deep wet ditch that surrounded the work, and carried

it with the bayonet; men and officers rushing, pell-mell, into the embrasures and over the walls, without the help of ladders. The enemy could no longer withstand the shock, but gave way, and in a moment more, the cheers of our brave fellows announced that we had possession of the *tête de pont*; the key to the battle-field. General Pillow had joined us, a short time previously, with one of his brigades—Cadwallader's—and is entitled to a share of the honor of this exploit.

Let us now see what the left wing of the army, under General Scott, has been doing. This officer, when he arrived at Coyoacan—one mile from Churubusco—halted, a short time, as General Worth had done, to make a hasty reconnoissance. This being accomplished, he dispatched General Twiggs, with one of his brigades—that of General Smith, less the Rifles—and Captain Taylor's field-battery, to attack the fortified position of San Pablo; following the movement, soon afterward, himself. He then directed General Pierce, with his brigade (Pillow's division), to follow another road, to the left, with a view to attack the enemy's right and rear, and at the same time favor Twiggs' movement. This brigade he subsequently reinforced, by Shields' brigade, composed, as the reader knows, of the gallant South Carolina and New York regiments. Shields, being Pierce's senior, assumed command of the whole; and as he had a bad habit of getting into hot places, he was obliged to be still further reinforced, before the close of the action, by the Rifles, which, up to this time, had formed General Twiggs' reserve, and by Captain Sibley's company of dragoons. Twiggs was soon hotly engaged, and Taylor's battery, which had imprudently been placed in an exposed position, was disabled by the enemy's heavier metal, and compelled (by superior orders) to retire. Shields, advancing about a mile toward the right and rear of the enemy, on the road leading in that direction, left the road, at this point, and bent his course more toward the causeway, passing through a heavy corn-field, and reaching a position, in a swampy meadow, in which was situated the *Hacienda de los Portales*. His object was to penetrate to the causeway, if possible, and attack the enemy in rear, or intercept his retreat when he should be driven from his position in front, by Worth and Twiggs. There were

four thousand of the enemy's infantry drawn up on the causeway, covered by some three thousand cavalry, extending on their right. Shields, at first, endeavored to out-flank this force, by a movement to the left (his left); but finding the enemy to answer his movement, by extending himself to the right, and to do this faster, because of the firm ground on which he maneuvered, than he (Shields) was able to move, he withdrew his men to the hacienda, and resolved on a front attack. "I selected," says he, "the Palmetto regiment as the base of my line, and this gallant regiment moved forward firmly, and rapidly, under a fire of musketry, as terrible, perhaps, as any which soldiers ever faced." The Palmetto thus forming the center of the attack, the New York, 12th, and 15th regiments were deployed in support, on the right, and the gallant 9th, under my friend, Ransom, was moved to the left. The whole line now advanced steadily, opening their fire as they came up. They were faced by overwhelmingly superior numbers, however, and a most deadly conflict ensued. Of the two hundred and seventy-two men of the gallant Palmetto regiment, who went into action, on this occasion, one hundred and thirty-seven fell on this bloody field! among them were the lamented Colonel Butler, first wounded (but refusing to retire), and then shot dead, and Lieutenant-Colonel Dickenson, mortally wounded. In consequence of the bad ground on which the gallant brigadier operated, and the vastly superior forces of the enemy, he must have been cut to pieces, but for the events which followed, in other parts of the field.

We left Worth, just as he had carried the *tête de pont*. At this moment, the battle was raging, as we have seen, with unremitting fury, on the left. Twiggs, with but a portion of one of his brigades, and with his battery of light artillery cut in pieces, was held in check before San Pablo—his men advancing in detached parties, under such shelter as they could find, and making but little progress, notwithstanding the cool courage they displayed; and Shields barely maintaining his ground, by the most desperate valor, and at the expense of frightful loss. As soon as our men rushed into the *tête de pont*, as described, captains Larkin Smith and Bomford, who were among the foremost, immediately seized upon the enemy's artillery, and turned it upon San Pablo, which

the *tête de pont*, from its superior elevation, commanded, as has been stated. At the same moment, Duncan's battery (which General Worth, instead of ordering it to batter superior metal, and thus subjecting it to be cut to pieces, as Taylor's battery had been, had prudently kept masked and in reserve) was hurriedly brought up to the front, and opened also, upon San Pablo. This celebrated battery was only about four hundred yards from its target; and I never before witnessed so rapid and destructive a fire. The gallant lieutenant-colonel had his men in fine training, and I am afraid to say how many discharges—from four pieces—were made in a minute, lest I should tax the credulity of the reader; but there did not appear to be an intermission of more than three seconds between the reports. The effect was speedy and decisive. The devoted fortress, which up to this moment, had not in the least slackened its fire, having now its artillerists driven from their guns, and the sharp-shooters from the church top and steeple, at once succumbed, and hung out a white flag from the church balcony; which being seen by General Worth, who, like the rest of us, was near Duncan's pieces, watching his beautiful "*exercice*," with admiration, he ordered the fire to be discontinued, and dispatched an officer to accept the surrender.—Leaving thus, to his subordinates, as he always did, the details of receiving swords and flags from the enemy, and of looking after prisoners, in which smaller minds find so much gratification, he hurried on, in pursuit of the now flying enemy—the long and beautiful causeway leading to the city gates, being filled with his masses of cavalry and infantry, in a confused and disorderly retreat. The moment the enemy had begun to waver, and show signs of confusion, Shields, with the *remnants* of his gallant regiments, had rushed forward, and now reached the causeway, just as the head of Worth's column came up. He fell into our ranks, and joined with us in the pursuit. Pillow, who was with us, here reunited his division, and the three generals pushed on together. It is four miles from Churubusco to the city of Mexico. The united forces continued the pursuit for two miles and a half, to Candelaria, when General Worth (who had no orders from General Scott, and who was ignorant of his intentions), in consultation with the other generals, called a halt. He was soon afterward



overtaken by an order from General Scott, to desist from the pursuit. In the meantime, however, Colonel Harney coming up with two squadrons of cavalry, he was permitted, by Worth, to make a dash at the rear of the enemy. In the eager pursuit, Kearney, who with Captain McReynolds, of the 3d, headed the charge, rushed up to the very gate of the city, sabring all in his way—not with impunity, however, as he lost an arm. McReynolds and Graham were also wounded, and Lieutenant Ewell, who had succeeded to the command, had two horses shot under him. Major Mills, of the 15th infantry, who was a volunteer in this charge, was killed at, or within, the gate. This gallant feat of my friend Kearney, performed with less than a hundred men, proved our ability to have entered and possessed ourselves of the city, within two hours after the battle.

If the reader has followed me attentively, through the details of this eventful and long-continued struggle—it lasted more than three hours—he has seen that I have made good my assertion, that it was mainly fought and won by General Worth. If the facts be true, as I have stated them, it appears, 1st, that the *tête de pont* was the key to the enemy's position; 2dly, that when this work was carried, no abatement had taken place in the battle, on our left, where Twiggs and Shields, under the orders of the general-in-chief, were both held at bay; 3dly, that soon after Larkin Smith, Bomford, and Duncan opened upon San Pablo, that work surrendered; and 4thly, that the giving way by the enemy, in front, as a consequence of the capture of these two places, enabled Shields to charge up to the causeway, in time to join Worth in the pursuit. There is no escaping from this chain of military reasoning; and the only dispute, if there be any, must be about the facts. It is not denied, that Worth captured the *tête de pont*, before an impression had been made on any other point. And it is not denied, that Smith, Bomford, and Duncan turned their artillery upon San Pablo, some twenty minutes before that fortress fell; but a claim has been set up by General Twiggs' division, of having captured this latter work, inasmuch as Captain Alexander, of one of Twiggs' regiments, received the surrender; which, General Worth, as we have seen, had dispatched one of his subordinates to receive. Nothing is more natural, than that these

differences of opinion should arise among chivalrous and honorable men, who look at the events they describe, from *different points of view*. Captain Alexander, and his brave associates, were bearding San Pablo, in front, and were, of course, intent only upon their own operations. When they observed the fire of the fortress slacken, they rushed forward, and entering the work, sword in hand, believed they had carried it, not having seen Worth playing upon it, in flank and rear, and with his artillery—they having nothing but muskets—opening the way for them. General Worth and his staff witnessed all these operations, from a point not more than four hundred yards distant; and when we pushed forward, in pursuit, neither the general, nor any one of us, had the least idea that any counter-claim could possibly be set up, to the capture of this place. General Worth's officer, whom he dispatched to accept the surrender, had to pick his way through many obstructions, in an attempt to take a short cut to the fortress, and was finally compelled to turn back, and pass through the *tête de pont*, to be able to reach it. By this time, Worth's column was well on its way, in pursuit of the enemy, and Captain Alexander had already entered, and received the surrender.

But to set this question at rest, I will quote the enemy himself, who, of course, is the best judge of the motives which influenced his surrender, and of the facts which occurred within the precincts of his own fortification. General Rincon commanded San Pablo, and General Anaya—afterward president, *ad. in.*, of the republic—the *tête de pont*; the whole being under the command of General Santa Anna, who, being general-in-chief, was well in the rear. General Rincon, in assigning causes for his defeat, in his dispatch to the minister of war, says: "The bridge redoubt (*tête de pont*), situated on the San Antonio road, and which was not under my orders, was assaulted and taken by the enemy, which enabled him, *libremente envolver nuestra posicion, que mira al sur*"—freely to envelop our position, which looks to the south. In other words, General Rincon regarded the *tête de pont* as the key to his position, uncovering his rear, and assigned the capture of this work, by Worth, as the cause of his defeat. Further: the commander of the artillery, under Rincon, in making

his report to his chief, uses the following language: "Having informed your excellency that the battery on the right [in San Pablo] was disabled of its artillery, I received an order from your excellency, to reinforce that flank, by withdrawing the pieces from the front, when, to my horror, I discovered that the enemy *had already charged and carried the tête de pont.*" These guns were not shifted, and plainly, because the commandant of artillery, like his chief, regarded that all had been lost, in losing the *tête de pont*. Much of the loss, as well as the glory of this battle, fell upon Worth's division, although all the strategic skill of the commander was put in requisition to spare his men, as much as possible. The relative numbers of the killed and wounded, gathered officially, after a battle, always show where the fighting was done. Worth's loss, on this occasion, was three hundred and forty-nine; General Shields', whose command was much less numerous than Worth's, was two hundred and forty; General Twiggs', whose division was about the size of Worth's, was two hundred; and General Pillow's, whose division was the largest on the ground, something short of two hundred. The enemy's loss was but little, if any superior, to our own, owing to his having fought behind defenses, and to his wonderful speed of foot, in saving himself when routed. A large number of prisoners was taken in San Pablo—the enemy having retreated from the *tête de pont* into that work. Among others, there were captured some twenty-seven deserters from our army, most of whom had deserted during the war, and entered voluntarily into the enemy's ranks. The penalty of death awaited them. General Worth, in speaking of these miscreants, says: "These wretches served the guns—the use of which they had been taught in our own service—and with fatal effect upon the persons of their former comrades."

Thus was fought, on the 20th of August, 1847, the battle of Churubusco, one of the most brilliant exploits of our arms, and in which larger numbers had been engaged, on both sides, than in any previous battle of the war. General Worth, who had seen much hard fighting in two wars, after having described the movements of his division, expresses, in the following language, his sense of the triumph we had achieved. "When I recur to the nature of the ground, and the fact that the division (2600 strong,

of all arms) was engaged from two, to two and a half hours, in a hand-to-hand conflict, with from 7000 to 9000 of the enemy, having the advantage of position, and occupying regular works—which, our engineers will say, were most skillfully constructed—the mind is filled with wonder, and the heart with gratitude to the brave officers and soldiers, whose steady and indomitable valor has, under such circumstances, aided in achieving results so honorable to our country—results not accomplished, however, without the sacrifice of many valuable lives.” General Scott generously and eloquently expressed his appreciation of the services of his subordinates, as follows: “So terminated the series of events, which I have but feebly presented. My thanks were freely poured out on the different fields—to the abilities and science of generals, and other officers—to the gallantry and prowess of all, the rank and file included; but a reward infinitely higher—the applause of a grateful country and government—will, I cannot doubt, be accorded, in due time, to so much merit, of every sort, displayed by this gallant army, which has now overcome all difficulties—distance, climate, fortifications, ground, and numbers.” General Shields, in his official report, makes the following honorable mention of my gallant friend, and co-lieutenant, Shubrick, who as the reader recollects, joined the staff of this officer just before our march from Puebla. “Lieutenant Shubrick, of the navy, who accompanied me, attached himself to the Palmetto regiment of his native state, and fought in its ranks, and is spoken of handsomely, in the report of its commander.” He was one of the hundred and thirty-five who escaped unhurt out of the two hundred and seventy-two of the gallant South Carolinians, who had gone into battle. Pillow makes like honorable mention of my *protégé*, Rogers, in quest of whom I had come all the way from Vera Cruz. “My personal staff, Captain Hooker, my adjutant-general and chief of my staff; Lieutenant Rains, 4th artillery, and Lieutenant Ripley, 2d artillery, aids-de-camp, and Passed-Midshipman R. C. Rogers, volunteer aid-de-camp, greatly distinguished themselves by their fearless and gallant conduct, as well as by their judgment and skill in leading forward my different commands, and placing them in position for effective service, throughout these long and desperate conflicts. I trust the

general-in-chief will deem their conduct worthy of his special notice."

And now, in imitation of other chiefs, I must not forget to bring to the notice of the reader *my* "personal staff." Seymour, arrayed in his tarpaulin hat, with about three yards of ribbon around it, and with his pea-jacket buttoned up, to the chin—he always wore this garment because it had capacious pockets for the convenience of stowing away *menavelins*—and girded *taut* around the waist, by a flaming red sash, and mounted on a rough-looking Mexican pony, which was in the habit of having a *fight* with him and throwing him every twenty-four hours, was sometimes visible and sometimes invisible; taking a fancy, every now and then, to make an independent cruise, to see what was going on, in other parts of the field, in order, as he said, that we might "put it down, all right" in our log-book. He swears he killed two Mexicans with his own hand—but he adds, that being "bloody gray-jackets," he considers them of little consequence. I can testify, with more certainty, to his having pryed my horse out of a ditch, into which I had fallen chin-deep in water while attempting to leap it, with a fence-rail, which he called a capstan-bar; and to his having gotten hold, by some of those means which sailors only know—there were sundry shops in the village, from which the affrighted Mexicans had run off—of a pocket-full of *puros*—cigars—and a flask of *aguardiente*; and that the *aguardiente* was not "bad to take," after a hard day's ride.

General Worth encamped in advance of the other divisions of the army—a position he had so nobly won—and very near the place where he had been halted by the general-in-chief. It so happened that we pitched our tent on the very spot (Ladrillera, known formerly as Xoloc) on which Cortez had established his head-quarters, some three centuries and a quarter before, while prosecuting the siege of the city, which we were now attempting, in our turn, to enter. A hospital was hastily prepared a short distance in our rear, and thither were carried all the wounded that could be found, in the short space that intervened before dark. Notwithstanding our exertions, however, many a brave fellow, who had been bereft of a limb, or otherwise mutilated, spent the night, on the now deserted field of his glory, alone with

his wounds and his anguish! As the shades of night began to close around, the sky became overcast by dull murky clouds, and a misty rain set in—a befitting pall for the dead who lay strewn over the battle-field. Now that the excitement of the battle and of the pursuit was over, we had leisure to reflect upon the terrible work, in which we had been engaged; to recall to mind, with sorrowful hearts, the various comrades who had fallen by our sides, and to shudder at the thought, that the battle of Churubusco, while it had crowned the generals with laurels, would carry mourning and desolation into the heart of many a wife and helpless orphan; would crush to the earth, never to rise again, many a fond and doting mother; and would array fathers, and brothers, and sisters in tears. In view of this darker picture of the great Moloch of the human species, War, terrible indeed, is the responsibility of him who lightly or thoughtlessly provokes it. We almost hated ourselves for the elation which we had permitted to take possession of us a few hours before, while rending the air with the shouts of victory.

“We can better brook to behold the dying,  
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,  
Scorched with the death-thirst and writhing in vain,  
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.  
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,  
Whate’er be the shape, in which death may lower,  
For fame is there, to say who bleeds,  
And honor’s eye on daring deeds!  
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread,  
O’er the weltering field of the tombless dead,  
And see the worms of the earth and fowls of the air,  
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there.”

Our total loss, in killed and wounded, was eleven hundred, of whom eighty-four were officers. This great disproportion of officers shows the secret of our success; the gallant fellows led, and the men followed them. The next day was devoted to the sad duty of collecting and burying the dead—the corn-fields, dikes, and ditches, and other broken ground, being carefully searched for any unfortunate wounded, who might not yet have been found. At 11 A. M., we broke up our encampment, by order of the general-in-chief, and marched for Tacubaya. Having been

halted an hour and a half, on the way, by superior orders, we did not arrive until 5 P. M. General Scott had preceded us, escorted by Harney's dragoons, and taken up his quarters in the archiepiscopal palace, which, crowning the village—that occupied a hillside—overlooked it, and commanded a fine view (at the distance of about a mile and a half) of the city of Mexico.

At this stage of our proceedings two questions very naturally present themselves to the reader's mind. The first is, "why was the battle of Churubusco fought?" and the second, "why did not General Scott enter the city of Mexico immediately after the battle?" It would be difficult to answer either of these questions satisfactorily. The mass of our people, rendered enthusiastic by the brilliant events of the campaign, have hitherto bestowed but little reflection on the subject; and perhaps even now, such is their taste for blood and glory, that they would not have one of these battles *unfought*, if they could. But the time will come, when (the freshness of the events having disappeared) the military critic and the moralist will both demand answers to these questions. In the eye of philosophy, no more blood should be shed in a war, than is requisite to attain its purposes; all waste of life beyond this, is criminal; and if a fearful responsibility rests upon the civil power, in developing a war, an equally fearful one rests upon the leaders of armies, in its conduct. Let us test the battle of Churubusco by these principles. The object of General Scott's campaign was to strike a vital blow at the enemy, by reaching and possessing himself of his capital. By reference to the map, the reader will perceive, that General Smith's victory, at Contreras, opened half a dozen roads—all of them practicable for wagons and artillery—to this point. After leaving San Angel, one might take the Niño Perdido road, the Piedad road, or the road to Tacubaya, without being obliged to approach Churubusco, nearer than a mile and a half. Now Churubusco being an isolated fortress, four miles from the city, it is impossible to point out a single sound reason, why it should have been assaulted; and if assaulted at all, why it should have been assaulted in front,\* since

\* The following was a favorite maxim with Napoleon. "It is a well understood maxim, in war, never to do what the enemy wishes you to do, for the simple reason, that he does wish it. One should always avoid, therefore,

General Scott had nothing to do, but to take either of two cross roads leading from the Niño Perdido road, into the causeway in the rear? But why assault it at all? Once at Tacubaya (and this was the point which General Scott made the base of his subsequent operations against the city), the works at Churubusco, having no bearing whatever upon the defense of the city, were as useless to the enemy, as those of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo. The latter was rather nearer the city, indeed, than Churubusco, and it would have been just as wise, after turning it, to have gone back and assaulted it, at great loss, as it was to assault Churubusco, after having turned it; and that it was turned, we have the testimony of General Valencia, and General Scott himself, who when speaking of the great results of the victory of Contreras, says in his dispatch: "Thus was the great victory of Contreras, achieved; one road to the capital opened; seven hundred of the enemy killed," etc. But this point will not be disputed. What was to be gained by the capture of Churubusco? Nothing; since the enemy would himself have abandoned it, the moment we had taken up a position at Tacubaya, or any other point in its rear, as he had done the Peñon and Mexicalcingo, when we took the route around lake Chalco. He would have done this, not only because the works would no longer have been of service to him, but because of the necessity of withdrawing his troops, to oppose a new front to us. When it is recollected that this was not a battle offered to us by the enemy on the open field, and which we were not at liberty to decline, but a terrible and bloody assault upon strong works, in front, which we wrested from the enemy at a sacrifice of eleven hundred men, in order that we might have command of a road, into which we could have entered peaceably, in the rear, and of which we made no use, when we obtained possession of it, the reader cannot fail to see the greatness of the mistake. Perhaps the old doctrine of the inexpediency of leaving a fortified position, in the rear, arose to perturb the vision of the

---

giving him battle on his own ground, which he has reconnoitered and studied; and one should be still more careful not to attack him in his intrenchments. It follows as a consequence of this principle, that a position should never be attacked in front, which may be attacked in flank or rear."



commander-in-chief. But we had already abandoned this "question of the rear" (which, indeed, had had no application to our circumstances, since we left Jalapa) when, in the words of General Worth, we had "crossed the Rubicon," by crossing the Rio Frio. We had, as I have before remarked, left the Peñon and Mexicalcingo behind us, and why should we not have left Churubusco also, which was farther from Mexico than Mexicalcingo? I fearlessly invite the examination of these views by military men, in the full confidence that their criticisms will sustain me. I can imagine but a single reason which the apologists of the campaign—and there are men, who not content with extolling its real points of excellence, are blind to all its defects—can urge with any show of plausibility, in favor of this battle; and that is, that it beat and weakened the enemy, and rendered our entry into the city more easy. A moment's reflection will show us the fallacy of this. Armies contend for superiority, in open field—it is there they try to weaken each other, with a view to ulterior results. But who ever heard of one army assaulting another, in fortifications, for this purpose, or for any other purpose, but to possess itself of the fortifications, which have become obstructions to its further progress? Further, we were not in a condition to play this weakening game, being in the heart of the enemy's country, beyond the reach of reinforcements, and having but 10,000 men to his 30,000. We were precisely in the position of Cortez, who husbanded his men with so much care for his final assault upon the city. Where we lost one man, the enemy could afford to lose ten, and gain by the operation. In his eight millions of population, he had plenty of recruits to step into the shoes of his dead soldiers—we had none. Beside, this argument loses all its force, by what afterward took place. We did not enter the city of Mexico, but, as the reader will perceive, as we progress, instead of taking advantage of the splendid and costly victory we had gained, we gave the enemy ample time to recover from the effects of his defeat; thus imposing upon ourselves the necessity of doing all our work over again. The reader has seen, that the gallant Captain Kearney charged, by Worth's permission, up to the city gate, and that the no less gallant Major Mills, of the 15th, was killed at, or as some say, actually within the gate. This demonstrates the facility with

which we might have entered; not because the enemy was so much weakened, that he had not proper garrisons for the protection of his batteries and the service of his guns, as few men would have sufficed for this, but because he could not close his gates or fire upon our troops, without closing them and firing upon his own men also. We should have entered pell-mell with him, as a delay of a single day would enable him to rally, and deprive us of all our advantages.

It is but just to General Scott to let him speak for himself, and assign his own reasons why he failed to enter the city of Mexico. He says, in his dispatch: "After so many victories [he means, Contreras, and San Antonio, and the three battles into which he divided Churubusco], we might, with but little additional loss, have occupied the capital the same evening. But Mr. Trist, commissioner, etc., as well as myself, had been admonished, by the best friends of peace—intelligent neutrals, and some American residents—against precipitation; lest, by wantonly driving away the government and others dishonored, we might scatter the elements of peace, excite a spirit of desperation, and thus indefinitely postpone the hope of accommodation." One of these "intelligent neutrals" was a Mr. McIntosh, the British consul, a man who had married in the country, was thoroughly Mexican, and was, beside, a creature of Santa Anna. He acted an important part in the preliminary negotiations which followed; and it was at his house in Tacubaya, that the commissioners afterward met to negotiate the armistice. Our friend Kendall, of the New Orleans Picayune, known favorably and extensively, by his "Santa Fé Expedition," and by his more recent and elegant work, entitled "Battles of Mexico—Illustrated," was sitting in our tent, on the evening of the battle—it was about twilight—when this gentleman arrived, in company with the Mexican general, Moray Villamil, and one or two others, to propose a truce to General Scott. The commission was entertained a few minutes by General Worth, and then dispatched, under an escort, to the rear, to General Scott's head-quarters. When they had gone, Kendall, with the bluntness and frankness which characterize him, exclaimed: "It's no use, we're humbugged—McIntosh is among them!" Kendall, some years before, had been a prisoner, in

Mexico, and knew the man well. So it turned out—we were humbugged, as the reader will perceive. It was only astonishing that any man who had been six months in Mexico, should have learned so little of the Mexican character, as to have supposed the people capable of being “dishonored,” by being beaten; or possessed of public virtue enough, to be driven, in any extremity, to “desperation.” It was not two months since Santa Anna and the congress had laughed at us, and played off upon us the farce, which I have described a few pages back; and it was evident to every one, except to Mr. Trist and General Scott, both of whom had strong political reasons, for concluding the war as soon as possible, and negotiating a peace, that Santa Anna’s only object, *was to gain time*, and that he would never consent to treat with us, in good faith, until we drove him from the capital. We had as yet, but penetrated his outer line of defenses, and he was, of course, not going to yield the city without a struggle, after having bestowed upon its fortifications so much money, and such unheard-of exertions.

With regard to General Scott’s fears of “dispersing the elements of peace,” by driving the government out of the capital, we were obliged to disperse these elements at last, after much hard fighting, and many heavy losses, and they seemed to reassemble at Queretaro all the more rapidly, for the dispersion. And this will always be the case, as an enemy never refuses to make peace, because he has been too much, but because he has been too little, beaten. But a speedy peace, both General Scott and Mr. Trist were resolved to have, and in their eagerness to secure it, they were overreached by the astute Santa Anna, who played upon their credulity until he was ready to resume defensive operations, and then defiantly threw off the mask. This scheme will be developed as we proceed.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE Armistice continued—Exchange of letters between Santa Anna and Rejon—The trickery put in play by the former, to dupe General Scott—Armistice promulgated to both armies—Negotiations for peace—Amusing diplomacy—Rupture of negotiations—Stoning of the American wagons, in the city of Mexico, by the populace—The armistice declared at an end—Sharp correspondence between General Scott and General Santa Anna—The village of Tacubaya described—Execution of the deserters captured at Churubusco—Reflections upon the campaign—Events preceding the battle of Molino del Rey.

HAVING asserted, in the last chapter, that the Mexican general did not entertain, from the beginning, the most remote idea of making peace, and that the armistice into which he entrapped us, was nothing more than one of those tricks, known as a *ruse de guerre*, I proceed to make good the assertion. This will be made sufficiently apparent from the two letters which follow, and which fell into my hands, by accident, after we entered the city of Mexico. Rejon, the writer of the first of these letters, was one of the principal politicians of Mexico, and had, in former years, occupied a post in the cabinet under Santa Anna.

“QUERETARO, *August 29, 1847.*

“To his excellency, Don Antonio Lopez Santa Anna :

“MY RESPECTED FRIEND AND SENOR :—I avail myself of an extraordinary courier to write a few lines only, as I have not time for more. With the greatest pain I have learned, that since the unfortunate affair of the 1st division, under General Valencia, you are talking of entering into negotiations for peace ; and that the minister of foreign affairs has directed to the president of congress a communication offensive to our army, and humiliating to the republic. No, my general ! the war ought to be prosecuted ; and if the capital cannot be saved, abandon it, as you did Puebla, and withdraw our troops to continue the war against the enemy in the best man-

ner they can. Resources will not be wanting, as the states, with the slightest encouragement, will supply them. *Peace will destroy you*, whereas the continuation of the war will cover you with honor and glory; and, if you will but carry it on without truce and with energy, nothing will be able to alienate from you the affections of your countrymen. In this quarter the disgust has been general, since we first heard of these sad negotiations, and yesterday morning a courier passed through here from Toluca for the interior, with communications from the state of Mexico, arousing the states to revolt against any authority that should attempt to make peace in the capital. I know this, as I received one of these communications myself; and to be frank with you, as a friend, I must inform you that I am committed to this course.—*Continue the war, and I will perish by your side.*

“MANUEL REJON.”

General Santa Anna, in reply to the above, writes as follows:

“MEXICO, August 31, 1847.

“TO DON MANUEL REJON, *Queretaro*.—My esteemed friend.—I have received your gratifying favor of the 29th inst., and in reply, I have to say to you, that I have read with the most bitter regret the charges you have made against the government, for the course it has pursued since the unfortunate affairs of arms, of the 19th and 20th inst. After the defeat sustained by General Valencia at Padierna, I was under the necessity of falling back upon the last line of fortifications of the capital; first having encountered all the enemy's force, at the *Puente de Churubusco*. On the day after this affair, *when I was preparing to renew the combat*, the enemy solicited an armistice, in order that the commissioner of the United States, Mr. Trist, might be heard, which I granted; *because the suspension of hostilities would give my troops rest, re-establish their morale, and enable me to collect the dispersed, and adopt other measures to insure a reaction.* I wished beside, to strengthen the justice of our cause, by listening to the propositions of the United States; because, to speak frankly, our obstinacy in refusing to receive these overtures from the United States, placed them in the right in continuing the war. The negotiations have com-

menaced, but I assure you, in the name of a true Mexican, which I have the honor to bear, that my government will not accept any propositions of peace, which shall detract from the dignity of the nation. If our honor cannot be saved, the war continues, and shall continue with obstinacy and energy, until the United States recognize the justice of our cause, and make reparation for the insults they have offered us. This is my purpose; so you may at once set yourself at rest, and continue your efforts to keep public opinion in the proper channel, and to encourage all good Mexicans to co-operate with loyalty and confidence, in the defense of the common cause.

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA."

From the context of the above letter it is seen, that the writer's only objects were, first, to gain time to collect his scattered forces, and to renew the *morale* of his army, for another struggle; and secondly, to strengthen his cause by appearing to listen to propositions he never meant to accept; for he knew very well beforehand, in what our propositions consisted, and that their object was not "to recognize the justice of our cause, and make reparation for the insults they have offered us." The reader has not failed to remark the expression used in this letter, to the effect, that while the writer of it was preparing to defend himself, on the day after the battle of Churubusco, the enemy, that is, General Scott, *solicited* an armistice, which he, the writer, *granted*. This is a contradiction of my previous statement, that the proposition came from the enemy; but both statements, paradoxical as it may seem, are true. This requires some explanation; and the explanation will serve to show the reader how thoroughly we were duped, and how adroitly Santa Anna played his cards, not only to obtain the armistice, which was to save him from destruction, but to relieve himself from the suspicion of being inclined to peace. It was artfully represented to General Scott, and afterward to the commissioners who negotiated the armistice, that although General Santa Anna was seeking the negotiation in good faith, there was a large party opposed to him, eagerly watching his movements; and that if it should appear officially, that he had made the first advance, in bringing about the armistice, this party would seek to crush him, and thus, perhaps, postpone indefinitely, our

hopes of concluding the war. It was insisted, therefore, that in all the public documents connected with the armistice, it should appear that the proposition came from us. This suggestion, alone, should have put us on our guard; have shown us that the Mexican people were not yet prepared for peace, and that the commanding general, who was the mere creature of the people, could not be acting in good faith—notwithstanding any representations to the contrary, made by “intelligent neutrals, and some American residents.” But the artifice succeeded, as will appear from the following correspondence of the two generals-in-chief. It will be recollected, that on the evening of the battle, viz: on the 20th, McIntosh, one of the “intelligent neutrals,” came out to our camp, in company with General *Mora y Villamil*. They had an interview with General Scott, and the next day the correspondence took place, as follows:

“HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY, U. S. AMERICA,

“*Coyacan, August 21, 1847.*

“To his excellency, the president, and general-in-chief of the republic of Mexico:

“SIR:—Too much blood has already been shed in this unnatural war between the two great republics of this continent. It is time that the differences between them should be amicably and honorably settled; and it is known to your excellency, that a commissioner on the part of the United States, clothed with full powers to that end, is with this army. To enable the two republics to enter on negotiation, I am willing to sign on reasonable terms, a short armistice. I shall wait with impatience until to-morrow morning, for a direct answer to this communication; but shall, in the meantime, seize and occupy such positions outside of the capital, as I may deem necessary, to the shelter and comfort of this army.

“I have the honor to remain, with high consideration, etc.,

“Your excellency’s most ob’t serv’t,

“WINFIELD SCOTT.”

“MINISTRY OF WAR AND MARINE, *Mexico, Aug. 21, 1847.*

“SIR:—The undersigned, minister of war and marine of the government of the United States of Mexico, is instructed by his excel-

lency, the president, commander-in-chief, to reply to your communication, in which you propose to enter into an armistice, with a view to avoid the further shedding of blood between the two great republics of this continent, for the purpose of hearing the propositions which may be made for this purpose, by the commissioner of his excellency, the President of the United States of America, who is at the head-quarters of the American army. It is certainly lamentable, that in consequence of the disregard of the rights of the Mexican republic, the shedding of blood has become inevitable, between the first republics of the American continent; and your excellency, with great propriety, qualifies this war, as unnatural, as well on account of its origin, as the antecedents of the two people, identified by their relations and their interests," etc.

"ALCORTA."

The reader thus perceives that the *official* account of this transaction, represents us, as pausing in the career of victory, to sue for an armistice, which had, in fact, been begged by the enemy. But for the circumstances which I have above detailed, it would put us, in the eye of the historian, in the humiliating attitude, of continuing to beg for a peace, which the enemy scorned to grant us. And then, the insulting tone and temper of Alcora's note! Where were the wits of Mr. Commissioner Trist and of General Scott, that they did not see that this was not the mood in which a negotiator, desirous of peace, enters upon his duties? At the very moment of consenting to *grant* us an armistice, we are insultingly reminded of the wrongs we have inflicted on Mexico, and are told that the war is, indeed, an unnatural one, on account of its origin, etc. Verily, one on reading this correspondence, would suppose, that we had at length become convinced of our error in waging war upon our enemy, and were desirous of an opportunity of making him an humble apology.

The reader recollects the ludicrous struggle which took place between Santa Anna and congress, some six weeks before this, in which each contended that the other should take the initiative, in receiving Mr. Trist's propositions, and the remark which was then made of the insincerity of Santa Anna's scruples. Here is the illustration of it: When Santa Anna was desirous of another



battle, his constitutional scruples prevented him from treating with us, but now that an armistice had become necessary to him — all things remaining as before—he saw no difficulties whatever in his way, in approaching us. Indeed he expressly declared that he did so, in virtue of the permission given him by congress, to exercise his ordinary functions; which permission, he had declared, on the former occasion, to be insufficient! This was the wily chief with whom we had to do, and whom we good-naturedly permitted to cajole us into the loss of a thousand more men.

The commissioners to negotiate the armistice met, as I have before said, at the house of McIntosh. They were, on our part, generals Quitman, Smith and Pierce; and on the part of the enemy, generals Mora y Villamil, and Quijano. Major Palacios, a gentleman, who having been educated in the United States, spoke English, attended the Mexican commissioners, as secretary and interpreter, and I accompanied the American commissioners in the same capacity; which gave me the opportunity of witnessing the tortuous and insincere policy of the enemy as above described. We sat up the whole night, disputing with our opponents, about the *wording* of a few articles, to the precise phraseology of which, Señor Mora, who did all the talking on the Mexican side, attached great importance. He was a creature of Santa Anna, and assured us, with the gravest countenance, that his chief was in earnest, in desiring to put an end to the war. Our own commissioners acted under precise orders from their general-in-chief, and carried out his instructions. Ratifications of the armistice were exchanged on the 23d—three days after the battle—and it was forthwith promulgated by both commanding generals.

On the same evening on which we were engaged at the house of Mr. McIntosh, in negotiating the armistice, General Santa Anna assembled the generals of his army; laid before them a statement of his means for carrying on the war, and urged them to persevere in the struggle, in the event of our attempting to impose any dishonor on Mexico, in the conferences which were to ensue, between Mr. Trist, and the Mexican commissioners.—With mock humility, on this occasion, he endeavored to find some Miltiades, among his generals, who would undertake the charge of the public defense, volunteering to wave his rank, and serve

under him. All of which was duly bulletined to the nation, by his minister, Pacheco.

On the 25th, General Herrera, formerly president of the republic, Señor Monjardin, a justice of the supreme court, and Señor Garay were appointed commissioners, on the part of Mexico, to meet Mr. Trist, and enter upon negotiations for peace. All three of these gentlemen declined to serve; but General Herrera, at the earnest solicitation of Santa Anna, changed his determination, and afterward sat on the commission. General Herrera assigned as his reason, for not wishing to serve, the following: "That being at the head of the government, in 1845, when the United States sent a commissioner to arrange the difficulties, which had arisen on the subject of Texas, his administration had been calumniated, and himself separated from the government, because he had been of opinion that the said commissioner should be received, in order that his propositions might be heard," etc. To which Santa Anna replied that this was the very reason why he insisted on his serving; they both being of the same opinion, with regard to "the propriety of at least listening to the enemy's propositions." The commission was afterward rendered complete, by the appointment of Messrs. Couto and Atristain, and General Mora y Villamil.

On the 24th of August, and the day after General Santa Anna had held his council of war, a cabinet meeting was called, and among other items, the following were agreed to, as instructions for the commissioners, viz:

- 1st. The general basis on which the commissioners are to treat is, that Mexico has triumphed in the war, and is in a condition to carry it on with success; 2d, that the American commissioner should be required to declare what were the motives and intentions of his government, in provoking and prosecuting the war; 3d, that the United States should claim no rights as growing out of the war; but that the negotiation should be conducted as a friendly one throughout; 4th, that the independence of Texas might be recognized, in consideration of an indemnity, but that the limits of Texas should be understood to be those which were prescribed by the treaty of 1819, and not to extend to the Rio Grande, as a congress of pretended Texans had declared; 5th,

that it should be understood, that Mexico relinquished her claims to Texas, not in consequence of annexation, or conquest, but by virtue of sale ; 6th, indemnity to be made for damages, loss of property, and the extraordinary expenses of the war which had been waged on the Mexican territory ; 7th, indemnity to be made to the families of Matamoros, Monterey, Vera Cruz, and other towns, villages, and haciendas, who had suffered in consequence of the war ; 8th, indemnity to be made for depredations committed by the American troops ; 9th, that the United States be required to exclude slavery from the acquired territory ; 10th, that all captured ships and trophies be returned ; 11th, that the captured Irish prisoners be restored ; 12th, that this treaty is not to be definitely ratified in a shorter time than one year, etc. To these items of instruction (which I have gathered from the context of the original document—see *Diario del Gobierno*, of the 9th of September, 1847—and numbered without any reference to the order in which they were placed by the Mexicans themselves), others were afterward added. If, up to this time, the reader has had any doubt as to the real object with which Santa Anna entrapped us into granting him an armistice, that doubt must now be dispelled. The malice of the defeated chief could not have enabled him to cast a more studied insult upon us, than he had done by these items of instruction to his commissioners. He not only required of us impossible things, with a view to render the negotiation nugatory, and enable him to carry on the war, which he never meant to put an end to, so long as he could remain at the head of it ; but he taunted us with points entirely foreign to the war ; the wily chief knowing well, that he touched a vital question, when he alluded to the exclusion of slavery from Texas.—But he reckoned without his host, when he supposed that such men as Herrera and Couto, would consent to act under such instructions (their authority being farther limited to simply *hearing*, without deciding anything until reference could be had to him). Not only these two leading members of the commission, but the whole five resigned in a body, when the instructions were sent them ; and only consented to serve afterward, on condition of a part of the instructions being withdrawn, other parts modified, and their general powers amplified.

On the 25th, Mr. Trist notified Mr. Pacheco, that he was ready to enter upon the negotiation, and was informed, on the following day, that the commissioners would meet him, at four o'clock, on the evening of the 27th, at Atzacapozalco, a hamlet intermediate between the two armies. They met at the appointed time and place, and it was soon ascertained, that the pretensions of the two parties, notwithstanding the modifications which had been made by Santa Anna, were wholly irreconcilable. The negotiations, however—the place of meeting being removed to a more convenient point (the house of Alfao), on the causeway of Chapultepec—were spun out for several days, until it was convenient for Santa Anna to show his hand. The principal dispute, of course, was about the boundaries of the two republics; Mr. Trist requiring Texas to the Rio Grande, New Mexico, and both Californias—the United States paying an indemnity for all, save Texas—and the Mexican commissioners, although consenting to the sale of Upper California, refusing to part with Lower California, New Mexico, or that portion of Texas included between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Mr. Trist, after a day or two, abandoned his pretensions to Lower California, and offered, if the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande should be the only point of dispute, to refer this question to his government; which would require the armistice to continue some forty-five days. But Santa Anna decided, that he would not await this reference, which he declared, beside, to be useless, as the retention of New Mexico, and of this strip of territory, was a *sine qua non* with him. He was well aware, that the war grew, mainly, out of our claim to Texas to the Rio Grande; and he knew, if Mr. Trist did not, that the war would be continued unless this point was yielded—which was the very result he was aiming at. Although he had abandoned many of his arrogant pretensions, in deference to the better judgment of Herrera and his associates, he by no means intended to forego his secret, as well as avowed determination, of continuing the war. The Mexican commissioners placed their desire of retaining the barren strip of territory, between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, principally, on the ground, that had been pointed out to them by Humboldt, some forty years before, viz: that it was their natural military and commercial frontier. They wished, in

imitation of children, who attempt to obstruct a stream with tiny bulwarks of sand, to interpose this barrier (which was to remain unpeopled) between us and them, to prevent further encroachments, and thus preserve their territory intact for the future.— They feared, too, and with justice, that our proximity would derange their narrow system of commercial restrictions, and render an additional line of internal custom-houses necessary. They had no sound policy on which to base their retention of New Mexico; but insisted that it would be dishonorable to abandon one of the most loyal of their provinces, to its fate. Mr. Trist seems to have conducted this negotiation, if not to a favorable conclusion, at least with much temper and discretion, as the Mexican commissioners, in making their final report to the government, speak of him in the following flattering terms: "It remains for us to say, that in our intercourse with Mr. Trist, we have found only motives to appreciate his noble character, and, if some day the work of pacification shall be completed, it will be done by means of negotiators adorned with the estimable traits which, in our opinion, distinguish this minister."

The negotiations were brought to a close on the 6th of September. Santa Anna had thus had a respite of seventeen days; a period sufficient to enable him, to "give my troops rest, re-establish their *morale*, and enable me to collect the dispersed, and adopt other measures to insure a reaction." His bad faith had not only been shown, by his course with regard to the negotiation, but had been manifested in various other ways. Among other things, it was provided by one of the articles (7th) of the armistice, as follows: "The American army shall not, by violence, obstruct the passage from the open country, into the city of Mexico, of the ordinary supplies of food, necessary to the consumption of its inhabitants, or the Mexican army, within the city: nor shall the Mexican authorities, civil or military, do any act to obstruct the passage of supplies from the city or the country, needed by the American army." My friend, Hargous, with whom the reader is acquainted, as one of the most active financiers and purveyors of the army, having made arrangements for drawing supplies for General Scott, from the city, on the 26th, we dispatched sixty wagons, for this purpose. The wagons were met

at the gate by an escort of about forty Mexican lancers, and were permitted to enter. They penetrated as far as the grand plaza; but before they could receive their loads, a mob assembled around them, and began to assault the unarmed teamsters, with sticks and stones. This movement was commenced by the boys, then joined in by the women, and finally some of the better classes of the population took part in it. It was now reported by some one, that our entry into the city in this manner, was a conspiracy to take armed possession of it. With this, the mob grew more furious, and shouting, "*Mueran los Yankess—muera el General Santa Anna, por traidor!*"—*death to the Yankess—death to General Santa Anna as a traitor!*—began to stone the Mexican escort, as well as the wagoners; and the affair becoming alarming, our commissaries gave up the effort to obtain supplies, and made the best of their way back to the camp. One of the teamsters was killed, and several badly hurt, in this affair, which would have resulted much more seriously, but for General Herrera, who fearlessly threw himself into the midst of the mob, and shamed the people, telling them that they should be "valiant on the field of battle, but humane toward the defenseless." Although there were twenty thousand troops in the city, there was no effort made, by Santa Anna, to repress this mob—he was, on the contrary, no doubt, well pleased at it. A similar effort to obtain supplies was made on the following day, but resulted as before, and we were obliged to abandon all attempts, to avail ourselves of the benefits of this article of the armistice.

General Scott, at length, having his patience exhausted, and being informed by Mr. Trist, that the negotiation was at an end, addressed a note to General Santa Anna, accusing him of sundry breaches of the armistice, and informing him, that if a satisfactory excuse was not rendered by noon, on the following day (September 7th), he would declare the armistice at an end. In reply to this note, Santa Anna writes: "The civil and military Mexican authorities have not prevented the passage of provisions to the American army; if the transmission of these has been retarded, it has been because of the imprudence of the American agents, who have not previously put themselves in concert with those authorities, and have thus given occasion to the popular effervescence,

which it has cost the government much labor to repress. It is false that any new work of fortification has been undertaken, there having been only some repairs made to one or two works, to put them in the condition they were in at the time of concluding the armistice. I was, on the contrary, informed at an early day, that you had established a hidden battery in Tacubaya; but I forbore to take any notice of it, because I was unwilling to make the peace between two great republics depend upon things which though grave in themselves, were of but little account in comparison. I have been profoundly affected, also, by the complaints which have come to me, from the fathers and husbands dwelling in the villages occupied by your troops, of the violence which has been done to their daughters and wives. These same villages have been robbed, too, not only in violation of the armistice, but in contempt of the laws of civilized nations. I have kept silence until now, in order that I might not obstruct a negotiation which promised to terminate a scandalous war, which your excellency has justly characterized as 'unnatural.' But I will not insist upon offering you apologies, as I am well aware that the real cause of your threats to terminate the armistice, has been my refusal to sign a treaty which would not only deprive my country of a considerable portion of its territory, but of the honor and decorum, which she is determined to defend at all hazards," etc.

Thus was terminated, in ill-humor, on both sides, an act which was begun in folly on ours, and in treachery on that of the enemy. The reader must not suppose that the opposition of Mexico to a peace, at this time, grew out of any generous resolve (as the concluding paragraph of the above letter would lead him to believe) to defend the national honor, and preserve, intact, the Mexican territory. He has been told more than once, that there was no "people" in Mexico, in the sense in which this term is understood in the United States. In other words, that there was no enlightened public opinion, descending through the various classes of the population, and controlling the action of the government. The ignorant, and but half civilized masses, were opposed to us, from a feeling of caste and a sort of barbarian hatred, common to savages, against all strangers. The hatred of the upper classes was not less intense, and arose out of comparisons but

little favorable to themselves, which they could not but make between the two nations, and out of a jealousy of our power, and a certain undefined dread of future encroachments on our part. But notwithstanding this hatred of the upper classes—who alone formed the body politic—many of them were inclined to peace, from prudential considerations; being apprehensive, if the war continued, that they would ultimately be compelled to make greater sacrifices than those demanded of them at present. They knew, full well, that the honor of a beaten nation, and especially of a weaker one, was not compromised by its making peace, on the best terms it could procure, when it could no longer defend itself; and, as for territory, they saw the policy of parting with, at least, Upper California and New Mexico, which, owing to the internal disorders of the republic, they had ceased to govern, with any regularity or system, for several years. But, unfortunately, faction stepped in to prevent any concert of action between these men, and the impulses of patriotism gave way, in many instances, to egotism. They were politicians, and belonged to the “out party,” and had less dread of the American army, than of Santa Anna and his adherents. They knew very well, that if the fifteen or twenty millions of dollars, which we were to pay for the ceded territory, once got into the hands of their political opponents, it would all be absorbed by them without their being able to share in the plunder; and they feared that with this money, Santa Anna, with his army, would fasten himself upon them, perhaps, for a long term of years. They were, therefore, not so much opposed to the peace as to Santa Anna’s being the person to conclude it. On the other hand, Santa Anna, whom the people began to despise, on account, among other things, of his numerous defeats, was sanguine of being able to defend himself in the capital. Although, with his shrewdness, he must have seen the necessity of very soon bringing the war to an end, and the advantages which would result to him, as being the instrument to effect this, he was well aware that, but for the army, his party would be in a minority, and he was afraid to undertake so decisive a step until he should have strengthened himself by some temporary advantage over us. The reader thus perceives some of the hidden motives which actuated those very patriotic gentlemen, the politicians of Mexico,



about this period. All parties claimed, of course, to act in the name of honor and patriotism—words which form a part of the unmeaning vocabulary of the politician in Mexico, as elsewhere.

While the negotiations for the armistice, and afterward for peace, were progressing, the army, cantoned in Tacubaya and the adjacent towns, remained inactive. Tacubaya is a pleasant little village, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and is a kind of watering-place in the neighborhood of the capital.—Many of the city merchants have extensive villas here with highly cultivated gardens, luxurious baths, etc. Several clever English families met us here, with a frankness and cordiality inspired by a community of race, language and laws; and many pleasant recollections linger in the memory of the writer, of evenings spent in Tacubaya, in the society of these agreeable people. We had free access, at all hours, to their houses and gardens, billiard tables and baths—John Bull manifesting, here, as everywhere, the independence which belongs to his character, and not seeming to care a whit about what the Mexicans might think of his unequivocal conduct in the premises. He knew that it was sufficient for him to say, in imitation of the ancient Roman, “I am an English citizen,” to insure his being respected, in person and property, even amidst the wars and revolutions of Mexico! In Tacubaya, we were within about twelve hundred yards of Chapultepec; the flags of the two belligerent armies waved, therefore, in close defiance of each other, and the report of the morning-gun, and the music of the *reveillé* of one camp, were re-echoed by the other. From the *azotea* of the house of one of our friends, we occasionally amused ourselves watching the various movements of our enemies, as they relieved pickets, sentinels, etc.; the very colors of their uniforms, and an indistinct outline of their features being perceptible through our glasses. At night, the “all’s well” of the American sentinel, was responded to by the “*alerta*” of the Mexican.

In order that the thread of my narrative of our future operations may not be hereafter broken, I must beg the reader’s permission to anticipate events, by a few days, that I may take a passing notice of a sad tragedy which was performed in the camps of generals Pillow and Twiggs—the former quartered in Miscoac, and the latter in San Angel. The reader will recollect the hopes

entertained in the beginning of the war, by the Mexican chiefs, of large desertions from our army, and the exertions made by them, by the issue of seductive proclamations and addresses, to bring about this result. These delusive hopes were inspired by a number of miscreants, who had deserted at different periods—mostly during the war—and gone over to the enemy, filling his greedy ears with the most extravagant stories of the disaffection and disorder prevalent in the American camp. Twenty-seven of these persons were captured in the fortress of San Pablo, at Churubusco, and others at other points. They had been enrolled in a battalion composed of foreigners, called the battalion of San Patricio, and had served the enemy's artillery, with great success. They fought like devils, in the *tête de pont*, and San Pablo, and shot down some of the officers under whom they had formerly served, and whom they recognized as they advanced at the heads of the different storming parties. It was these prisoners about whom Santa Anna was so solicitous, when he instructed his commissioners for negotiating the peace, to demand their being delivered up to him. They were tried—to the number of fifty—by a court-martial, of which the veteran Colonel Riley was president, and all found guilty, and condemned to be hanged. General Scott commuted the sentence of three of them, who had deserted previous to the war; two, who were recommended to mercy by the court, and four others, in whose favor there appeared some mitigating circumstances. All the rest were executed in conformity with their sentence. These executions, which would have been proper at any time, were peculiarly so now, as we were in the midst of the enemy's country, with a desperate struggle before us, and with greatly inferior forces; there were many foreigners in our ranks; some of them not even naturalized citizens, and the enemy was making every effort still, to entice them away. The salvation of the army might depend upon an example being made of these dishonored and dishonorable men, and General Scott had the firmness to make it. The brave Irish, who remained faithful to us, and who were always among the foremost, and most devoted of our troops, were more rejoiced at this event than the native-born Americans even, as they had felt keenly the stigma which this conduct of their countrymen had cast upon them.

Let us now pursue the events of the campaign ; and first of all, let us cast a glance at our condition, after having been now thirty days in the great valley of Mexico, in which events of such vast moment, as I have described, followed each other in such rapid succession. We had made the masterly movement around Chalco, had fought the battles of Contreras, San Antonio, and Churubusco, and had reached a new base of operations at Tacubaya. But with the exception of turning the Peñon and Mexicalcingo, and forcing the pass of Contreras, what had we accomplished ? Nothing. We had turned aside from our road, to fight the battles of San Antonio and Churubusco, without results ; nay, more, with bad results, as we had lost eleven hundred men ; more than one tenth our whole force. We were in Tacubaya, it is true, but the reader has seen, that after forcing the pass of Contreras, it was not necessary to have fired a single musket, to accomplish this. And then, after we had made the mistake of assaulting and carrying a fortress which, when once isolated, would have been of no more use to the enemy, than if it had been in mid-ocean, we had failed to take advantage of a state of things which had not been foreseen, when the battle was commenced, and of which, if we had availed ourselves, we might have entered the city of Mexico. We had thus thrown away eleven hundred men to no purpose ; and after having humiliated ourselves, first, to beg a truce—*officially*—and then to beg a peace, which the enemy not only refused us, but refused us insultingly ; we had all our work to do over again, with crippled and reduced means ! I know it is easier to criticise a campaign, after it has been made, than to conceive and execute it properly, and unquestionably great allowance must be made on this score ; but still, I think the reader must acknowledge, that with every indulgence, great errors were committed—errors, which, *à priori*, he would not have been inclined to impute to General Scott.

But errors have not yet ceased, as the reader will perceive. We have, as yet, but penetrated the enemy's outer line of defenses. He beards us with an immense city, in which every house is a fortification, and the approach to which must necessarily be over causeways swept by cannon. Napoleon, when speaking of the siege of Valencia, in Spain, by Moncey, in which the

latter was beaten off, says, "a city with 80,000 inhabitants, barricaded streets, and artillery placed at the gates, *cannot be taken by the collar*;" but this was precisely what we had to do, with regard to Mexico, with 200,000 inhabitants. There were four principal *garitas* or gates of the city, on the side on which we were operating—from south to west—to wit, the gate of San Antonio, that of the Niño Perdido, that of Belen, and that of San Cosmé. The first stood at the entrance into the city of the great causeway of San Antonio, leading direct from San Agustín, and passing through Churubusco; the second commanded the causeway leading into the city, from a point a short distance this side of San Angel; the third commanded the causeway leading from Chapultepec into the city; and the fourth, that of San Cosmé, leading from Tacuba, and joined also by another causeway from Chapultepec. The ground between these several causeways was low and marshy, and in the rainy season—in which we were operating—partially inundated by detached pools of water. It was, therefore, impracticable. Several cross-roads passed from one causeway to another; sometimes two or more of these entering the city, at or near the same gate. These various approaches were cut from point to point, and were defended by breastworks and artillery. In addition to the batteries which commanded the direct approaches, other batteries were placed on the flanks of these, so as to fire across the road, and at the same time, upon the flanks and rear of the first batteries, when these should be carried. Each city-gate was a fortress, and the walls of the city were surrounded by wet ditches of great width and depth, constructed for the purpose of drainage, and now coming conveniently into play for defense. Other ditches and dikes, which had been constructed for a like purpose, extended in various directions, in the neighborhood of the city, and crossed and recrossed each other in a confused net-work. Every foot of this ground, at all approachable, had been taken possession of by the enemy, and fortified by breastworks and artillery. As we rode over these various positions, after the capture of the city, we were struck with amazement at the strength of the whole, and at the vast amount of labor which had been done, in the two or three preceding months. We no longer wondered that Santa Anna had been playing with

us, in the farcical proceedings of the armistice, and negotiations for peace, and that he had been sanguine of being able to defend himself.

On the 7th of September, the day after that on which General Scott had written his letter to Santa Anna, requiring of him an apology for violating the armistice; it was reported to the former, that the enemy was showing himself, in some force, on the neighboring heights around Chapultepec and Molino del Rey. It has been remarked, that the bishop's palace, where General Scott was quartered, stood on the crest of a hill overlooking the village of Tacubaya, and commanding an extensive prospect of the valley. From the *azotea* of this building, General Worth, accompanied by several members of his staff, and General Scott, accompanied in like manner, reconnoitered the enemy's movements—having a good view of them. The two generals discussed very freely the probable object and intentions of the enemy, and stated the conclusions at which they respectively arrived. General Worth thought the enemy designed to offer, or invite a general battle, and advised General Scott to attack him with all his disposable force, before he should have time to complete his arrangements. But General Scott thought differently, informing General Worth, that *Molino del Rey* was a foundry in active operation, busily engaged in casting guns and shot, boring cannon, etc., and stated that, no doubt, this display of force was intended to protect these operations; the enemy being much in want, as he had been informed, of *materiel*. We could see none of the evidences of Molino del Rey being a foundry, there being no smoke apparent, nor indeed any chimney from which smoke could issue. We were quite near enough too, to have heard the sound of machinery, if there had been any in operation. Nevertheless, as General Scott spoke positively, General Worth did not contradict him. It was understood, that Mr. Trist, who spoke the language, had got the information from some confidential Mexican sources, and that there could be no doubt about the facts. General Scott, deeming the destruction of the foundry of importance to his future operations, directed Worth with his division, in a careless, off-hand manner, to “brush away” the enemy, under cover of the coming night, cripple the machinery, spike or destroy the guns, and then

withdraw his troops to Tacubaya. I am particular in describing these circumstances, as General Scott's *coup de main*, to destroy the enemy's supposed foundry, proved to be the bloodiest and hardest fought battle of the campaign. General Worth forthwith addressed himself to the performance of his task. He caused the ground to be twice reconnoitered during the day, first by Captain Mason, of the engineers, alone, and then by this officer in company with Colonel Duncan. Two more talented and accomplished military men were not to be found in the army. These reconnoissances were pushed with a boldness bordering on temerity; and all the information concerning the position, and numbers, and defenses of the enemy, which it was possible to obtain under the circumstances, was obtained. General Worth, who had been satisfied from the beginning, by his own observation (confirmed by these reconnoissances), that the enemy had other objects in view, in making his demonstration, than the protection of the foundry, was apprehensive that the work might be too heavy for his division unsupported; and to provide against contingencies, requested that he might be reinforced; which request was granted, and Cadwalader's brigade was brought up from Miscoac, and ordered to join him. With a soundness of military judgment, which was afterward verified by the event, and much applauded in the army, he resolved to take up his position in the night, but to vary the order of the commander-in-chief so far, as to delay his attack until daylight. Assembling around him his chief officers, who were to take important parts in the coming engagement, he explained to them his plan of attack, illustrating his contemplated movements by the map and by a sketch which had been prepared by Captain Mason. It was a fine sight to see these noble fellows bending over the table around their distinguished chief, in eager examination of the various points they were to assault, and receiving their orders from his lips with a deference to his military abilities, which did both them and him so much honor. It is only necessary to mention the names of Garland, Clarke, McIntosh, Scott, C. F. Smith, and Duncan, to show how much talent surrounded that table; and to show, alas! that some of the brave fellows, who were there assembled, met a soldier's death the next day before ten o'clock, on the battle-field. General Worth having sketched his

plan of battle, and made each of his subordinates, not only acquainted with his particular part, but with the whole, in order that he might act the more understandingly, retired for the night, being quite unwell.

Soon afterward, the ordnance officer, in charge of the heavy guns for the morrow, came to General Worth's quarters, and informed several officers there present, that he was directly from General Scott, to whom he had explained General Worth's dispositions, and that he (General Scott), disapproved them, saying that General Worth must have misunderstood or disregarded his instructions, as he intended the attack to be made in the night, and the troops to be withdrawn to Tacubaya before daylight. Instead of communicating this intelligence to General Worth, now asleep, it was deemed advisable that an officer should go to General Scott, and state to him, again, what General Worth's dispositions were, and the reasons which had influenced him, in making them; in order that there might be no misunderstanding on the part of General Scott, in relation to the approaching operations. This was accordingly done. The officer found General Scott at supper, with several other officers present; the subject of his visit was immediately taken up, and discussed, in length and breadth, by General Scott, who stated, that from the most reliable sources, he had positive information, that Molino del Rey was a foundry, in full blast, casting guns and shot, from bells taken from the churches, in the city; that our recent captures had so crippled the enemy, in *matériel*, that many of his works were without guns to defend them, and that he was bending his whole energy to supply this important deficiency. General Scott also discussed, at length, the subject of military night attacks, saying all that anybody could say in favor of them, and a great deal more than sound military theory could approve, or experience illustrate. The principal, if not the only argument he urged against an attack by daylight, was, that our troops would be exposed to the "destructive fire from Chapultepec." After having exhausted this side of the question, he took up the other side for discussion. His principal arguments on this side, were, 1st, that it was at least possible that the work might prove more difficult, than was anticipated; 2d, that our artillery fire, which, in daylight, would be of

great value, in the night would be useless, and might prove worse than useless; 3d, that all experience showed, that artillery fire from elevated positions, need not be dreaded, and Cerro Gordo and Monterey were cited to illustrate that Chapultepec would exercise but little influence in the battle. This proved to be the fact; we did not lose a single man from the fire of this fortress! General Worth's order of battle was again laid before, and explained to, General Scott, by the accomplished officer who had undertaken this duty, and it was approved in every particular, except the following:—Worth had ordered Garland, with his brigade, in case circumstances favored the movement, to follow up the blow on Molino del Rey, and make a lodgement in the grove, at the base of Chapultepec, with a view to facilitate an assault upon this work, should it become necessary, or be thought advisable. This, General Scott disapproved, decidedly, and ordered the officer who had waited upon him, to return to General Worth, and inform him that it was his (General Scott's) positive instructions, that no matter how tempting the opportunity might be, not to make any demonstration toward Chapultepec; that from all the information he had received, *his line of attack upon the city would be to the right of Chapultepec*, and that once in the city, Chapultepec would fall, by its own weight. (How many valuable lives might have been spared, if he had so reasoned with regard to Churubusco?) General Scott's instructions on this point, as well as his approval on others, were duly communicated to General Worth, the same night, and the battle was fought the next morning, in that soldier-like style, which must forever challenge the admiration of the historian. To corroborate the above statements, with regard to the *intent* with which the battle of Molino del Rey was fought, which intent is already beginning to be disputed or explained away, by General Scott's friends, I quote from this officer's own dispatch, upon this point. It must be recollected that this dispatch was written on the 11th of September, four days after the above conversation took place, and when subsequent reconnoissances had caused him to waver, somewhat, in his original determination of entering the city by one of the causeways, *to the right of Chapultepec*, thus leaving this fortress, in the rear, to "fall by its own weight." He writes to the secretary of war, as follows—"The



same afternoon [7th] a large body of the enemy was discovered, hovering about the Molinos del Rey, within a mile and a third of this village, where I am quartered with the general staff, and Worth's division. It might have been supposed that an attack upon us was intended; but knowing the great value of those mills [Molinos del Rey], containing a cannon-foundry, with a large deposit of powder, in Casa-Mata, near them; and having heard, two days before, that many church-bells had been sent out to be cast into guns, the enemy's movement was easily understood, and I resolved at once to drive him, early the next morning [having abandoned his project of a night attack, as we have seen], to seize the powder and destroy the foundry. Another motive for this decision—leaving the general plan of attack upon the city, for full reconnoissances—was, that we knew our recent captures had left the enemy not a fourth of the guns necessary to arm, all at the same time, the strong works at each of the city gates; and we could not cut the communication between the foundry and the capital, without first taking the formidable castle on the heights of Chapultepec, which overlooked both, and stood between. For this difficult operation, we were not entirely ready, and moreover, we might altogether neglect the castle, if, as we then hoped, our reconnoissances should prove that the distant southern approaches to the city, were more eligible than this south-western approach." The reader has now sufficient evidence before him, to convince him that the battle of Molino del Rey was conceived and fought, without the least reference to any subsequent attack on Chapultepec, and as a military operation it must stand or fall, by this circumstance. So far from its having been regarded as the incident, and Chapultepec as the principal, the case was reversed; Molino del Rey was the principal object to be assaulted, and Chapultepec was regarded as a mere incident in the plan of attack.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**BATTLE of Molino del Rey—Order of battle—Desperate charges of Wright and McIntosh—Great slaughter that ensued—Duncan's light artillery repulses a charge of the enemy's horse—Piercing the enemy's center, and carrying of the Molino—Fall of the Casa-Mata—Total rout of the enemy—Reflections upon this battle—Its consequences—Bombardment and storming of Chapultepec.**

HAVING thus *fixed the responsibility* of this battle—a responsibility, which if it had not been saved, in part, by the southern approaches to the city proving more difficult than was believed, and thus throwing the commander-in-chief, in spite of himself back upon Chapultepec, as will be hereafter seen, would have been grave, indeed—let us proceed to show the masterly manner in which Worth obeyed the orders of his chief. The reconnoissances of the engineers showed that the enemy's left rested on a group of strong stone buildings (El Molino), at the western slope of Chapultepec, and about half a mile from the base of the hill; that the right of his line rested on another stone-building, called Casa-Mata (a Spanish word, from which we derive our word "casemate," used in fortification, to express a covered archway, or embrasure, in which a piece of artillery is mounted), situated at the foot of the ridge, that slopes gradually down from the heights above the village of Tacubaya, to the plain below, and distant from the first building about one-third of a mile; that these two buildings were more or less connected by irregular dikes, planted with the maguey, affording excellent cover for infantry; and that the enemy's field-battery occupied a position, midway between the two buildings, supported by infantry, on either flank, lying *perdue* behind the dikes. Both Molino del Rey and Casa-Mata were filled with infantry, the long *azotea* of the Molino, in particular, affording them an excellent position from which to pick off our troops as they advanced. The military reader perceives

of course, that the weak point of the enemy's position, as here described, was his center. Worth's order of battle was as follows:—Garland's brigade was ordered to take position on the right (our right), strengthened by two pieces of Drum's battery, to look to El Molino, as well as to any support which might be attempted to be sent to this position from Chapultepec, under whose guns it partially was. This brigade was to place itself also, so as to be within supporting distance of Huger's battery, of twenty-four-pounders, which was directed to take position on a ridge between Tacubaya and El Molino, within about six hundred yards of the latter, which it was designed to shake somewhat, previous to the assault. An assaulting party of five hundred picked men and officers under Major Wright, of the 8th infantry (Worth's own regiment), was posted on the ridge, to the left of the battering guns, to force the enemy's center. McIntosh's brigade (Colonel Clarke, its regular commander, being sick), with Duncan's battery, was assigned to a position still farther to the left, opposite the enemy's right, to look to our left flank, to sustain the assaulting column of Wright, if necessary, or to attack the enemy himself (the ground being favorable), as circumstances might require. Thus, to recapitulate briefly, the enemy's left, center, and right, were opposed, respectively, by Garland, Wright and McIntosh; Huger being with Garland, and Duncan with McIntosh. Cadwallader's brigade was held in reserve, in the rear of our line, and within easy supporting distance of any part of it. I invite criticism by the military reader, of these arrangements, conscious that they will stand the test of the severest scrutiny. They were carried out in the deadly conflict which ensued, with coolness and courage, and resulted in the complete, though bloody triumph of our arms, against overwhelming numbers. The new combinations which became necessary in the moment of battle, and which no man can foresee, were made by General Worth, on this occasion, with that quickness of perception, and celerity of thought, which distinguish the truly military man from the soldier of the closet.

We were astir, at head-quarters, at half-past two, A. M., on the morning of the memorable 8th, and the various columns being reported ready, they were put in motion at about three, on their respective

routes. It was not yet light, as we moved out of Tacubaya ; but the troops took up their positions, with the utmost precision, according to the order of battle, without the slightest mistake being made. We, of the staff, rode along in silence, the general only exchanging an occasional word with the engineer, as to the route ; we seemed to have a sort of presentiment of the bloody tragedy which was to be enacted. The night was perfectly clear, but without moon, and the sun afterward rose in all his glory, over the battle-field, to light up the work of carnage and death. At the earliest appearance of dawn in the east, Huger opened with his heavy pieces, which, for awhile, gave forth the only sounds that broke in upon the perfect silence of the field. Chapultepec seemed fast asleep, and it was some minutes before it could be aroused into returning our fire. When Huger had fired a few rounds at Molino, and this place was supposed to be somewhat shaken, Wright, with his storming party—under the guidance of Mason and Foster—rushed gallantly forward to assault, and pierce the enemy's center. He was met by a most appalling fire of musketry, and grape and canister, which at once revealed to General Worth, the formidable numbers he had opposed to him. Nothing daunted, however, he rushed on, driving infantry and artillerymen, at the point of the bayonet, but at terrible loss.—The ground, as before remarked, formed a gradual slope down to the enemy's lines, and it was down this slope (forming a slightly inclined plane) that our brave fellows were compelled to march, without so much as a twig to shelter them ; while the enemy lay concealed behind the dikes, and maguey plants, or was protected by the walls and parapets (around the *azotea*) of the Molino.—The enemy's field-battery was taken and the guns immediately trained upon his retreating masses. Before, however, they could be discharged, the enemy, perceiving that he had been dispossessed of this strong position, by a mere handful of men, rallied, and returned to the charge, aided by a tremendous fire of musketry, from the troops in and on the top of the Molino—within pistol shot. Eleven out of the fourteen officers who composed the command—the gallant major and his two engineers among the number—were shot down by this murderous fire ; and the rank and file suffered in proportion. The remainder were of necessity

driven back, and the enemy regained possession of his pieces, *bayoneting the wounded*, with a savage delight! This was a critical moment with us; and the fine military face of our chief, now compressed into sternness, exhibited more anxiety than I had ever before seen upon it. His division, and particularly the regiment he loved so much, was being cut in pieces before his eyes, but there was no help for it; his soldier's heart told him, that the battle, now that we were in it, must be won, at every sacrifice, or our *morale* would be gone, and in this lay our chief power.\* He did not once think of falling back, therefore, but ordered Smith's light battalion—which had been so terribly cut up, at Churubusco, and was now under the command of Captain Kirby Smith, the gallant lieutenant-colonel being sick—and the right wing of Cadwallader's brigade to advance, promptly to the support of the repulsed storming party. This order was executed in gallant style, and the enemy (being now hard pressed by Garland, on his left) gave way in the center, and his battery was captured a second time.

In the meantime, Garland's brigade, sustained by the battery of the gallant Captain Drum, assaulted the enemy's left, and after an obstinate and severe contest, drove him from the strong works of the Molino. The battering guns under Captain Huger, were now advanced to the captured position, and were opened, together with the enemy's own guns, on his broken and retreating forces. While these operations were progressing, on the enemy's left and center, Duncan's battery opened on his right, and the 2d brigade, under McIntosh, was ordered forward to the assault of this point. The direction of this brigade, soon caused it to mask Duncan's battery—the fire of which, for a moment, was discontinued—and the brigade moved steadily on to the assault

---

\* The following was Napoleon's maxim on this point: "The glory and honor of his arms, is the first point to be considered by a general who offers or accepts a battle; the preservation of his men is a mere secondary consideration. Indeed, the best means of preserving these, is to contend with courage and obstinacy for victory. In a retreat, to say nothing of the loss of honor, there are more men lost, than in two battles. A general should, therefore, never despair, so long as he has a few valiant men left to bear aloft his standards."

of the Casa-Mata, which, instead of being an ordinary stone house, as had been supposed by the engineers, proved to be a citadel, surrounded with bastion intrenchments, and impassable ditches—an old Spanish work, recently repaired and enlarged. The reconnaissance had been as close as possible, and this mistake as to the character of the work, had been unavoidable—the work being situated in low ground, and the lower portions of it being masked by dikes and maguey plants. While McIntosh was moving forward to assault this formidable work, a large body of cavalry (it afterward appeared from the official reports of the enemy, that there were four thousand of them, under Alvarez) was seen approaching us, on our extreme left, as with a view of charging us on that flank, or endeavoring to turn and envelop that position.—As soon as Duncan's battery was masked, as before described, by the interposition of McIntosh's brigade between him and the Casa-Mata, he was ordered to change front, to hold the enemy's cavalry in check, which he did rapidly, moving a little farther to the left. The Voltigeurs, under Colonel Andrews, were sent to support him; and Major Sumner, with his two hundred and seventy dragoons, was ordered also to place himself in position, near by, to profit by events, and pursue, if opportunity should invite, the enemy's retreating forces. In taking up this position, the gallant major, in order to avoid some ditches which impeded his march, was forced to pass within pistol shot of the Casa-Mata, when his command suffered considerably; the enemy knocking several of his dragoons from the saddle, and the affrighted and wounded horses careering wildly over the field. One of the enemy's brigades (two thousand, under Alvarez himself) moved boldly forward (Duncan purposely withholding his fire, to invite it), until it had come within good canister range, when the gallant lieutenant-colonel opened upon it one of those exceedingly rapid and terrible fires, for which his battery was so celebrated. The enemy could not withstand the shock, but was first checked, and then thrown into confusion, the front of his column recoiling in disorder upon its center, and this again upon its rear, until the whole mass commenced a disorderly retreat. The 2d brigade, under Andradá, which was forming to support Alvarez, was involved in the disorder and retreat of the 1st, and the whole four thousand horse

disappeared from the field. While Duncan was in the midst of these operations, General Worth dispatched an aid-de-camp to him, to direct him to be "sure to hold the enemy's cavalry in check"—to this message, this prince of artillery officers returned (scarcely taking his eye from his pieces) the following characteristic reply: "Tell General Worth to make himself perfectly easy, I can whip twenty thousand of them!"\*

Let us now return to McIntosh, whom we left advancing upon the Casa-Mata. As his gallant brigade came within easy musket range, the enemy opened a most destructive fire upon him, cutting down officers and men in fearful profusion. But McIntosh was a man whom danger never daunted, and he moved on amid this storm of balls until he was cut down mortally wounded. The brigade, under the lead of the gallant Martin Scott, continued on, however, until it reached the very slope of the parapet that surrounded the citadel. By this time Scott himself was shot dead; his next in command, Major Waite, was knocked down, badly wounded, and a large proportion of the gallant fellows were destroyed. A momentary recoil, and some disorder ensued, and the *remainder* of the brigade now fell back for support upon Duncan's battery, which, having repulsed the enemy's horse, as we have seen, had by this time returned to its former position. Duncan being now at liberty to renew his fire, opened again upon the

---

\* Previous to the war, the Mexican cavalry had been the boast of the nation. It formed a large proportion of the Mexican army, and was composed chiefly of lancers. General Waddy Thomson, who, when our minister in Mexico, had seen some choice corps of it maneuver, has paid it a high compliment, in his "Reminiscences of Mexico." These commendations proved to have been wholly unmerited, as the cavalry turned out to be the most worthless portion of the Mexican army. Although the men were, individually, good horsemen, either for the want of proper leading, or of proper organization, they never could be brought to the charge, in masses. Our infantry, after a little, came to hold them in so much contempt, that it never thought of forming itself, in square, to resist a charge. But neither men nor officers were wholly to blame for this inefficiency. Their horses were *too light*.—According to the maxim of the great Frederic, of Prussia, the spur, in a charge of cavalry, is of more importance than the sabre; but the spur could not give momentum to men mounted on ponies. The Mexican lancer makes a capital vidette, and would be formidable in the rear of a retreating army, but for front operations, in masses, is entirely useless.

Casa-Mata, with a *furor*, if I may so express it, inspired by the bloody repulse of McIntosh; and in a few minutes, thereafter, we had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy abandon this stronghold, and betake himself to flight, over the fields, where it was impossible to pursue him, both on account of Chapultepec, and of the broken character of the ground. The enemy was now entirely routed, having been driven from every point of his lines, which he had defended with more courage and obstinacy, than we had seen him display during any previous battle of the campaign.

Instead of "brushing away" the enemy, as General Scott had intended, we had fought a most desperate and bloody battle, with a force which, as was feared by General Worth from the beginning, was entirely inadequate to the undertaking. With three thousand men, including reinforcements, we had assaulted and driven from strong positions, a force of fourteen thousand, under command of Santa Anna himself, assisted by his ablest generals. But what will be the reader's surprise (if he has not already anticipated me), when I inform him that the object for which all this blood had been shed, never had any existence, except perhaps in the insidious and interested tales of Mexican spies, and in the imaginations of General Scott and Mr. Trist. Upon reaching the Molino, which was no molino — mill — at all, no vestige could be found of furnace, tools, or any other apparatus for the casting of cannon; and as for the church-bells, these rang forth, that same night, merry peals, in the city of Mexico, in honor of Santa Anna's triumph. This chief, supposing we meant to follow up our attack, on the Molino (as General Worth had, in fact, proposed to General Scott), by an assault on Chapultepec, and finding that we did not do so, very naturally concluded, and so stated in his bulletin, that we had been checked. When the battle was all over, General Scott rode out on the field, and complimented General Worth, for the gallant and soldier-like manner in which he had executed his work; which the latter received courteously, but with a clouded brow, and a troubled heart, as he had lost the flower of his division, and some of his most devoted friends, in the ill-advised contest. Having been directed to withdraw our troops to Tacubaya, wagons were sent for, and the mournful task was commenced, of collecting our dead and wounded, which



occupied us for several hours—the enemy, all the while, firing at us from Chapultepec, and particularly at the wagons, although he could see, most plainly, what was going on; an instance of barbarism but seldom recorded of civilized armies. Our loss amounted to nine officers killed, forty-nine wounded, and seven hundred and twenty-nine, rank and file, killed and wounded; making in all, seven hundred and eighty-seven! or a little more than *one-fourth* of the whole command. Out of a force of but little more than one-half the numerical strength of General Taylor's army, we had had more men killed or wounded, in about forty minutes, than had been killed or wounded in the two glorious days of Buena Vista. The most bloody charge on record, is that which was made by the 23d regiment of English dragoons, at Talavera, in which they left one-half their number on the field, killed or wounded. Wright's charge on the enemy's center, was even more bloody than this, as *eleven* out of the *fourteen* officers who belonged to the command, were cut down, and the men suffered very nearly in the same proportion! The only modern battle which occurs to my mind, in which one of the belligerents lost more men, in proportion to the whole number engaged, than we did, in this contest, was the battle of Medellin, on the Guadiana, in which Marshal Victor defeated the Spanish general, Cuesta. In that battle, the Spaniards lost *three-fifths* of their whole number, but most of them were cut down in pursuit, and not as our noble fellows were, in desperate charges against the enemy's fortified lines. The enemy's loss, in killed and wounded, as we learned from prisoners, and other sources, could not have been short of one thousand five hundred. We made eight hundred prisoners.

Kendall, of the Picayune, before spoken of, joined us in this battle, as did also, Major Borland, since become a distinguished senator from the state of Arkansas. My former messmate, Hargous, with Captain Wyse (an American and formerly a captain in the Mexican navy), came also gallantly to the rescue. General Worth speaks as follows, in his report, of all these gentlemen: "And I desire to express my particular obligations to Major Borland, Arkansas volunteers, lately a prisoner of war; G. W. Kendall, Esq., of Louisiana; Captain Wyse, and Mr. Hargous,

army agent, who came upon the field, volunteered their acceptable services, and conducted themselves, in the transmission of orders, with conspicuous gallantry."

On the day after the battle (the 9th), the honored dead were interred with the rites of war, on the heights of Tacubaya. A large trench was dug, in which the bodies were carefully and affectionately placed by the messmates of the deceased, after having been first followed to the ground by a mournful procession, with funeral music, and flags enshrouded in crape. The service of the Episcopal church was read in an impressive tone (General Worth, surrounded by a numerous *cortège* of officers, bending low and uncovered, to listen to the solemn admonitions of the chaplain), and at the words "dust to dust," the sappers and miners, who were in attendance with their spades, covered up from the view of their brethren, forever, another holocaust to the angry passions of mankind. The enemy's battlements of Chapultepec were crowded with spectators, looking forth upon the solemn scene, which a bright sunlight rendered quite distinct to them, and our minute-guns, as they were fired from time to time, were echoed (as we fancied, angrily) by the rocky heights on which the formidable old castle was seated. But we took our revenge.

No battle of the war has been so little understood as this battle of Molino del Rey. Although it was, as the reader has seen, the most sanguinary struggle that ever took place on the American continent, and one in which great valor and great military talents were displayed, it was preceded and followed by events of such magnitude as comparatively to overshadow it. Other causes, too, contributed to withhold it from the notice of the people, or to present it to them in an imperfect light. General Scott gave it but little prominence in his report, for reasons which the reader has not failed to perceive. While he had originated it in error, and caused it to be fought, with inadequate forces, for an object which had no existence, a rival general, whose fame was rapidly culminating, and whom he had already begun to regard with a feeling of jealousy and dislike, had covered himself with glory in executing his orders—a glory which will shine all the more effulgently for these causes, when the mists of prejudice and misrepresentation shall have passed away. When it was seen, too, in

how unfavorable a light the "truth of history" would represent this famous battle, for the chief of the campaign, interested writers in and about general head-quarters, undertook to "set history right" on the subject. They sought to show that it should have been a mere "brushing away" operation, instead of a great battle; and that much of the loss which ensued, was attributable to Worth's not having sufficient artillery on the ground. Let us endeavor to fix the responsibility of this, as we have done that of the origin of the battle. The reader has seen the difference of opinion as to the probable magnitude of the impending operation, which existed between General Scott and General Worth; the former regarding it as a mere *coup de main*, for the capture of certain cannon mounds and church-bells, and the latter regarding it as a general battle. General Scott designed, at first, that Worth should operate with his own division only, but upon application of the latter, afterward reinforced him with Cadwallader's brigade, and Drum's battery. The officer, who, as has been stated, waited on General Scott, to explain to him Worth's order of battle, *laid stress* on the necessity of these reinforcements; when General Scott replied to him, "that whatever work was to be done, must be done by Worth with the means he had placed at his disposal; and if he called upon him for more, he would do a very foolish thing." It is well known by many officers of the army, that, although we had captured a good deal of artillery and ammunition at Contreras, San Antonio, and Churubusco, we had captured but few shot suitable for guns of a heavy caliber, and it was apprehended that, in the then critical state of our affairs, brought about by the armistice, we should have use for every pound of these in our efforts to reduce the city. It was probably this consideration, among others, which induced General Scott to assign so little artillery to Worth. No amount of artillery would have obviated the necessity of Wright's charge on the enemy's center, for at that point we had a formidable battery opposed to us, which it was necessary to carry; and we have seen, that during McIntosh's charge on the Casa-Mata, Duncan's battery, which might have covered and facilitated the charge, was called off to repel an overwhelming force of cavalry, that menaced our left and rear. This latter was the only point, then, at which we felt the want of

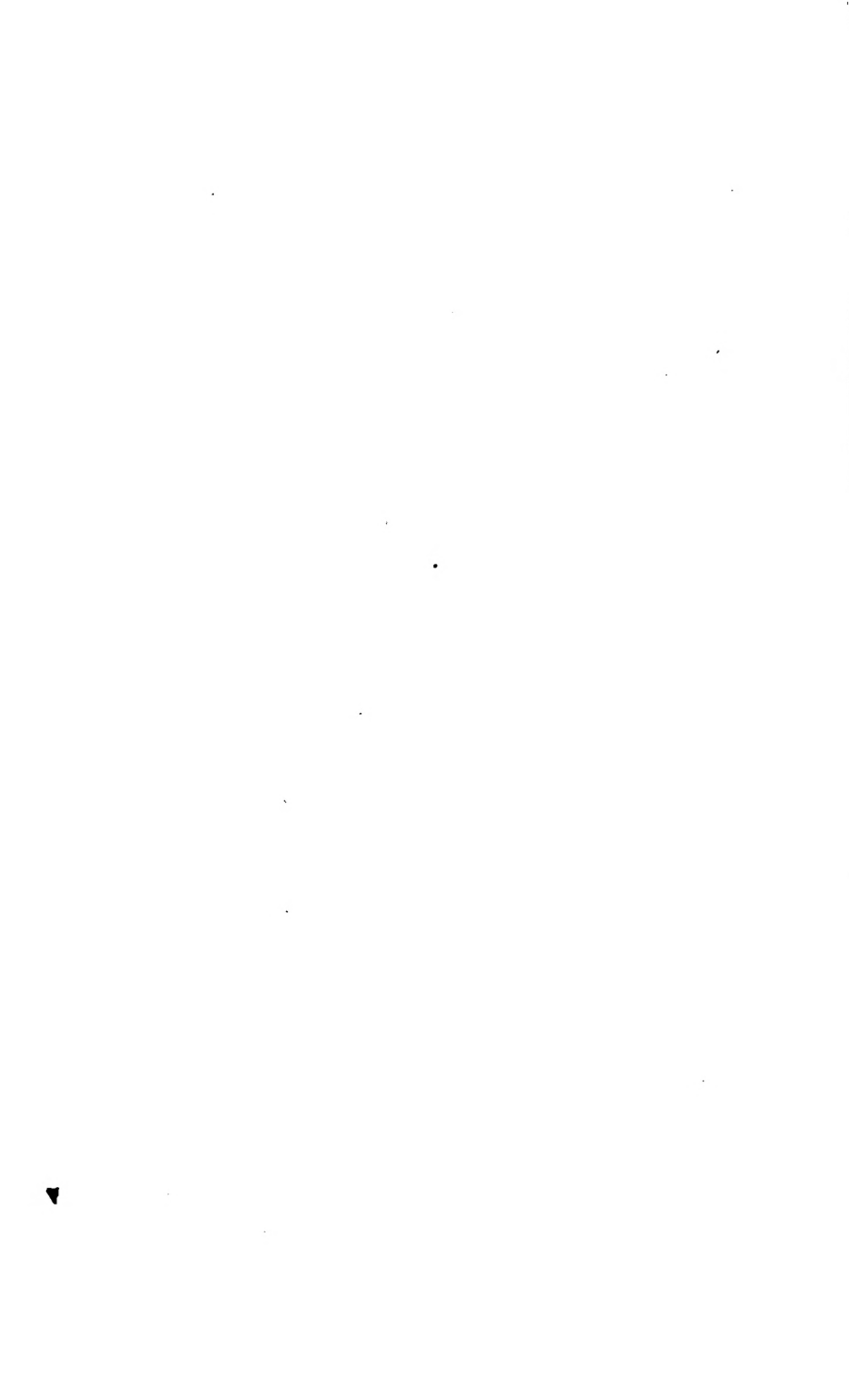
another battery—Drum and Huger being still actively engaged in other parts of the field—and if we had had one, a part, no doubt, of McIntosh's loss might have been avoided. There is another thing to be recollected too, with regard to this charge. The engineers, as has been stated, were unavoidably deceived as to the character of the work; and McIntosh's loss must, therefore, be regarded, as one of those chances of war, which no amount of talent or ingenuity can guard against or prevent. The great battle of Churubusco was fought on a reconnoissance of half an hour, while Molino del Rey had been reconnoitered for an entire day.

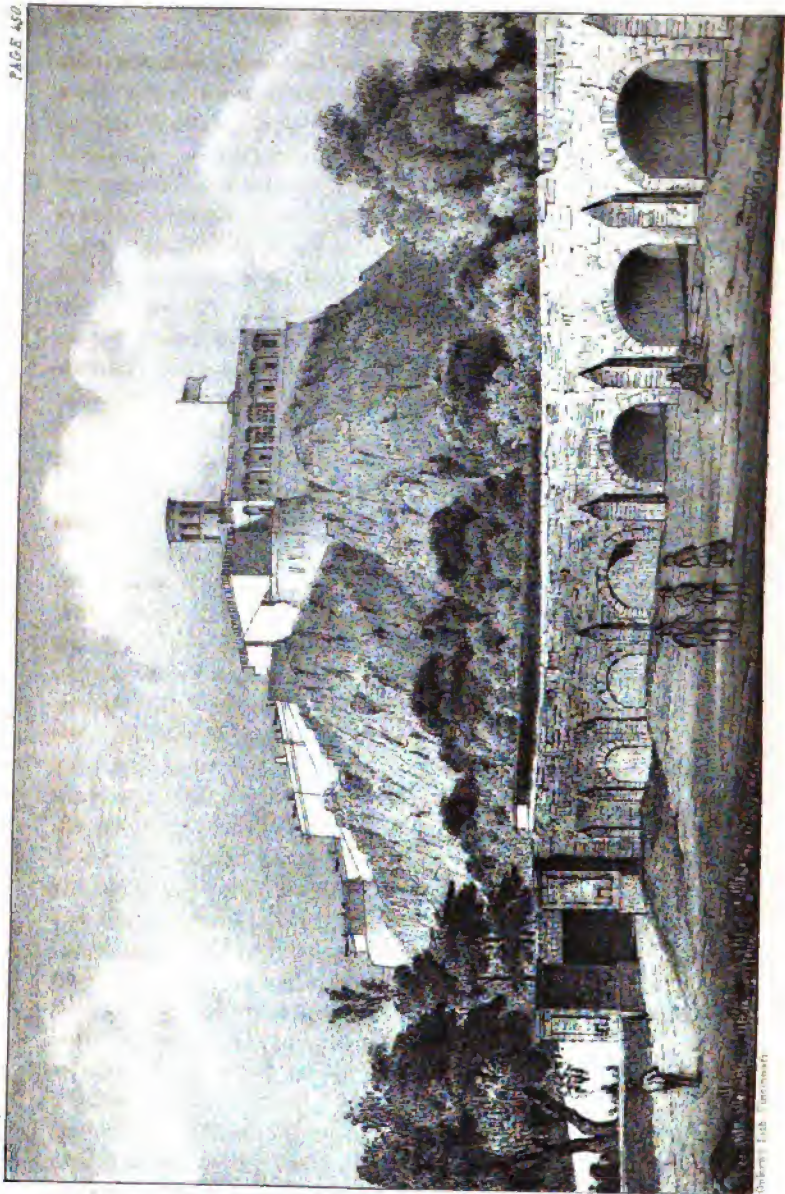
Although this bloody contest failed to effect the object intended by the commander-in-chief, it produced marked results with reference to the future success of the campaign. General Scott had not had the poor satisfaction, it is true, of receiving even so much as a cannon mold, or a church-bell, in exchange for eight hundred (in round numbers) gallant men; but General Worth had gained a battle, which *broke the power of the enemy* more effectually than any other battle of the campaign. It was a favorite maxim with Napoleon, that "In war, the moral is to the physical power as three parts to one." This great lever, the moral power, was put into our hands by the noble old hero of Palo Alto, Monterey, and Buena Vista, and we had wielded it, as the reader has seen, with wonderful effect up to the period of the fatal armistice of Tacubaya. This armistice had been so adroitly procured and managed, as to impress the Mexican people and army with the belief, that we had *asked for it ourselves*. They knew very well, that *they* had been beaten at Churubusco, but they asked each other very pertinently, if *we* had not been beaten too! When they reflected, that we had marched from Puebla with but ten thousand men; that we had already lost eleven hundred of these; and that instead of feeling ourselves strong enough to enter the capital, we had halted before the gates and demanded a cessation of hostilities, they very naturally concluded, that the tide of victory was, at length, about to turn in their favor. Their *morale*, thus finding a rallying point, was wonderfully restored, during the seventeen days, that the peace negotiations continued. They gained courage, as the reader has seen, to display their forces in open

field, in the neighborhood of Tacubaya and Molino del Rey, as if to invite a battle, on the very day on which the armistice was terminated. The battle of Molino del Rey *broke anew* this moral power of the enemy, and set it back again to where it had been immediately after the battle of Churubusco, and before the unfortunate armistice had been sprung upon us. When the Mexican army, fourteen thousand strong, under the lead of Santa Anna himself, intrenched in what it deemed an impregnable position, and resting on the giant old fortress of Chapultepec, as a *point d'appui*, found itself beaten by three thousand one hundred men, the latter not giving an inch of ground, although one-fourth of their number had been destroyed, it lost all courage and all hope of further resistance. It began, then indeed, to regard us as invincible.

It is known from indubitable testimony, that two thousand of the enemy deserted their colors, that very night; and I refer the reader to General Bravo's dispatch, to show that it was with the utmost difficulty, that this officer could retain his garrison in Chapultepec, from this time onward, until that fortress was carried. There is another point in which *Fortune* (who with her mantle, broad as that of charity, covers up so many of the blunders of war) favored the commander-in-chief, with regard to this battle. The reader has seen that General Worth asked permission to effect a lodgment in the grove, intervening between Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, with a view to facilitate an attack upon the latter, but was refused. He did this because, with that intuitive perception, which belonged to him more than to any other man in the army, he saw that this was the true point of approach to the city. General Scott, at this time, thought otherwise, and was pushing his reconnoissances in the south, with the confident expectation of finding a less difficult route in that direction; intending to let Chapultepec "fall by its own weight," as he expressed it. All the engineer force of the army was called into requisition, with this view; but after the most diligent examination, General Scott was forced to abandon his opinion, and coincide with General Worth. This was not until the 11th, however, three days after the battle of the cannon molds had been fought. It being resolved to advance to the city over the Chapultepec causeway, it became

necessary that this fortress should be carried; and to carry it, it would have been necessary, if Molino del Rey had not already been carried, to carry it also. The reader thus perceives how easy it is, for the friends of General Scott, to save his military reputation, in this particular, by manifesting a little regard for the "truth of history," and stating that their chief fought the battle of Molino del Rey, as a necessary preliminary to the assault of Chapultepec. But to judge of this transaction rightly, as a military operation, let us suppose that General Scott had found, as he had hoped, one of the southern approaches to the city more practicable than the causeway of Chapultepec, and that, in attempting to enter thereby, he had been beaten off for the want of the eight hundred brave men, whom he had sacrificed at Molino del Rey. What would the world have said of the affair of the cannon molds and church-bells in that event? It will be said that this was only a *mistake* of General Scott. True: that is all I mean to charge; but when mistakes are so pregnant of life and death, and of the safety and success of an entire army, a general-in-chief should practice all due precaution, and exercise his judgment upon facts, under a fearful responsibility. As the lion's share of the glory of a campaign belongs to him (how many lions soever he may have under him), he should be made, at least to bear his own proper share of the blunders. After the battle of Molino del Rey, and while the reconnoissances were being made, which were to determine our choice of a route, by which to enter the city, a perceptible gloom fell upon the army, and it began to be whispered, with what truth I know not, that one, if not more of the general officers, was in favor of intrenching ourselves where we were, and awaiting reinforcements. Out of the ten thousand men, with whom we had entered the valley, we had lost nineteen hundred on the field of battle; very nearly a fifth of our whole force. Worth alone had lost out of this number, eleven hundred and forty men, his veteran division having dwindled, from twenty-six hundred, to about fourteen hundred and sixty! Beside these, a large number of sick were in hospital; so that after deducting a necessary guard for the camp and baggage train, it was found that we could not muster seven thousand effectives, with whom, in the words of Napoleon, to take Mexico





CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC.



"by the collar." The dissatisfaction was very great, and men began to see and comment upon the mistakes which had been made. I do not believe that this despondency extended to the rank and file, so as to set back in any degree their *morale*. The officers were too prudent for this. It is due to General Scott to state, that he bore himself with great equanimity and firmness during this dark period of the campaign, and that he never appeared to lose confidence or waver, in the least, in his intention of forcing the city. Like his great co-laborer in the war, on the eve of the battle of Buena Vista, he seemed determined to accomplish his object, or to sacrifice himself and his army. Success crowned the efforts of both generals alike, and it is by this standard, mainly, that military, as other events, are judged. All the chances of war were against them, and if they had been beaten, they would have been ruined in the estimation of all military men; but they cast everything boldly upon the "hazard of the die," and the die turned up favorably for them.

There was, in reality, but little occasion, however, for this despondency, in the case of General Scott. Worth, at the battle of Molino del Rey, had opened for us the passage into the city of Mexico, more effectually than was then supposed. It was not known, while the powerful castle of Chapultepec was bearding us, and apparently defying any attempt to enter the city, that two thousand of the enemy had deserted *on the night of the 8th*, after the battle of Molino del Rey, and that General Bravo was obliged to set guards over his garrison, to prevent it from running away, in like manner. These facts came to light after the fall of this place, and after our comparatively easy entry into the city. In short, the *morale* of the enemy (or three-fifths of his power) was broken and gone; but of this we had no knowledge at the time.

The reconnoissances being ended, General Scott announced as follows, to the secretary of war, his intended change of operations. "After a close personal survey of the southern gates, covered by Pillow's division, and Riley's brigade, of Twiggs'—with four times our number concentrated in our immediate front—I determined, on the 11th, to avoid that net-work of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion to the south-west and west [Chapultepec], less unfavorable approaches." Chapultepec being thus

selected as the real point of attack, it was resolved to practice a feint before the southern gates, in order to deceive the enemy if possible (which, with his spies constantly in our camp, it was hard to do) as to our intention. For this purpose, on the 11th, Quitman was ordered from Coyocan with his division, to join Pillow, *by daylight*, before these gates; both generals being directed, after nightfall, to join General Scott at his head-quarters, at Tacubaya (where Worth was still stationed)—leaving General Twiggs, with Riley's brigade and Taylor's and Steptoe's batteries, to continue the feint. The fortress of Chapultepec, which it was now designed to attack, has not yet been described. It stands on a rocky and picturesque mound, at the head of the causeway of the same name, and within close cannon-range of Tacubaya. The waters of lake Texcoco formerly washed its base, and in the days preceding the conquest, it was a favorite resort of the unfortunate Montezuma. He had a palace here; and the cypress grove on the west of the hill, through which we fought our way to the fortress, afforded him a gloomy, but picturesque promenade, in his hours of recreation and retirement. Many of the venerable old cypresses, in this grove, which afforded us such friendly shelter from the enemy's balls, are three and four feet in diameter, and have probably stood from four to five hundred years; like the "cedars of Lebanon," witnessing the coming and going of many generations, and preaching eloquently of the nothingness of man. On the north, the hill is entirely inaccessible, it being a bluff precipice of rock; and it is surrounded, in its other parts, by two massive stone walls with ditches. The inner of these walls is from twelve to fifteen feet high. Within this wall, and on the apex of the rugged height, stands a tasteful and rather elegant building, with dome and colonnades, commanding an extensive view of the city of Mexico, and the magnificent valley around. This is, at the same time, the military college of the republic, and the citadel of the fortress. Hence proceeds all the science which has taught and prompted the Mexicans, for so many years past, to make a domestic battle-field of their unfortunate country. On the west, the hill descends, by a gradual slope, to the grove of cypresses, before described, and it was seen at a glance, that this was the side on which to assault it.

Previous to the assault, however, it was deemed necessary to "shake" it, in military phrase, with heavy artillery; and for this purpose, Lee and Huger were set to work to trace out and establish batteries. Four of these were established on opposite sides of the hill, and on the 12th they were opened under the gallant Drum, Anderson, Hagner, Brooks, Stone, and Andrews; Quitman's and Pillow's divisions, which had been brought up the over-night, as the reader has seen, covering. The fire of these batteries was continued the whole day, with very perceptible effect. From the *azotea* of General Worth's head-quarters (we, of the 1st, being as yet *hors du combat*) we had an excellent view of these operations, and could trace distinctly with our glasses the damage done, from time to time, by our skillful artillerymen, to the face of the building. The enemy's armament consisted of ten pieces of artillery—seven light, and three battering. The former were soon disabled by our fire, and the latter produced but little or no effect upon our lines—there not having occurred more than two or three casualties during the day. Night put an end to the fire on both sides. General Bravo, who had already lost a large portion of his garrison by desertion—the entire battalion of Toluca (four hundred and fifty), with the exception of twenty-seven men, having run off, since the battle of Molino del Rey—says in his dispatch, that the *morale* of his men was much depressed by this cannonade, in which he lost a considerable number killed and wounded, and that the desertions continued during the night, though in less numbers than before. He sent urgent requests to Santa Anna to reinforce him, but the latter failed to do so. On the morning of the 13th (the day of the assault), he states his force to be as follows: in the cypress-grove, two hundred and fifteen men; in the *Glorieta* (a redoubt half way up the hill, on the west side), and other portions of the lower defenses, three hundred and seventy-four; and in the military college, something less than two hundred; so that his whole garrison consisted of about seven hundred and eighty, all told. There seems to have been a difference of opinion between General Scott and General Santa Anna, with respect to the importance of this fortress. While the former regarded it as the key to the city, and a sort of turning-point of the campaign, the latter treated it as a point of but little

importance, in his general system of defense. He left it to be defended by a feeble garrison, although he had plenty of men at his disposal, and seemed to rely almost entirely upon his defenses at the city gates. His was, probably, the most correct view of the two; although it was a point on which military men might well differ. The fortress commanded the approach to the city, by the causeway of the same name, but it was by a plunging fire only, from a great elevation, which, even on a road without shelter, could have done us but little damage, as the battle of Molino del Rey proved; and this fire, little as it was to be feared, would have been rendered entirely harmless, by the shelter afforded our troops by the arches and massive pillars of the aqueduct. On the San Cosmé road its fire would have been nugatory. If it had been well defended, it would have cost us half our army to carry it; but fortunately we captured it with but little loss, as the reader will perceive, owing to the causes already detailed.

On the evening of the 11th, a party was dispatched to take possession, again, of Molino del Rey, which, as the reader recollects, General Worth had abandoned on the evening of the 8th, by the orders of the commander-in-chief. The enemy made no resistance, although it would have been easy for him to have re-occupied it on the same evening on which we had abandoned it, and to have compelled us to fight the battle over again for its possession. But General Scott's mistake in not continuing to hold it (he intending, at that time, to enter the city by one of the southern approaches), was remedied by Worth's having so completely destroyed the enemy's *morale*, that he no longer had courage for anything. On the evening of the 12th, after the cannonade above described, Pillow and Quitman were ordered to prepare for the assault, on the following morning. The whole army was rejoiced to see the latter, who had hitherto been kept guarding the rear, at length brought forward, to take an active part in the struggle. He had with him the gallant battalion of marines, which gained much merited distinction, in the brilliant series of events which followed. Worth, with the *remainder* of his veteran division, which, up to this time, had borne the brunt of the campaign, was ordered to take post near the Molino, with a view to support Pillow, who was to charge on this side; and General

Smith, who had so nobly unlocked for us the approaches to the city of Mexico, by the victory of Contreras, was ordered to hold himself in readiness to support Quitman, who was to advance to the assault on the south-east, by the Tacubaya road, which debouches into the causeway at the eastern base of the fortress. Beside supporting Pillow, our division supplied him with an assaulting party of two hundred and sixty strong, under command of Captain McKenzie, 2d artillery; and Twiggs' division supplied a similar party, under Captain Casey, 2d infantry, to Quitman.

All necessary arrangements being made, at daylight on the morning of the 13th, General Scott ordered his batteries to reopen upon Chapultepec, directing Pillow and Quitman to move forward to the assault, upon the cessation of his fire. This occurred about eight o'clock, and both generals immediately put themselves in motion. Pillow, having driven the enemy from his intrenchments, in front of the cypress-grove, by the aid of Magruder's and Reno's batteries, pushed forward the Voltigeurs, in two detachments, under Colonel Andrews, and Lieutenant-Colonel Johnstone, respectively, into the grove as skirmishers, closely followed by McKenzie, with his storming party, and by the 9th and 16th regiments of infantry. Some skirmishing occurred in the wood; but the enemy gradually retired before Andrews' and Johnstone's rifles, and Reno's mountain howitzers. The grove terminates at the base of the hill, but many detached bowlders of rock stood out boldly on the abrupt hill-side, and afforded our men partial cover, under which to ascend to the *Glorieta*; a redoubt already described as standing about half way up the acclivity. They soon gained possession of this, not without some loss, however. Among the first to fall was my gallant friend Ransom, who was shot dead while leading his regiment (the 9th) to the assault. His was a brave and noble spirit, and the pen pauses involuntarily to pay him this tribute. His friends will long mourn him, but perhaps selfishly, as he probably met that death, which, if the choice had been left to him (apart from the consideration of friends and family), would have been most welcome to his soldier's heart. He was born a soldier, educated a soldier, and died a soldier. *Requiescat in pace.* At this point, General Pillow having been wounded, and being no longer able to lead, our troops were brought to a stand, and were firing

from the walls of the *Glorieta*, and from the cover of the rocks, with little or no effect, against the walls of the fortress. If the defense had been at all vigorous, we must have been foiled; but General Bravo tells us, that the garrisons of his outposts, instead of falling back upon the citadel, as they had been directed, retreated in various directions, and made their escape; which conduct so disheartened the few men he had with him (less than two hundred), that he could scarcely keep his cannoniers at their guns. He ordered, too, he says, certain mines to be fired, which he had prepared for our destruction; but when the officer, Don Manuel Aleman, who had been charged with this duty, was hunted for, he was nowhere to be found!

Pillow, when he saw his troops falter, called for Worth's division to reinforce him, telling Worth's Aid, who by the orders of his chief had put himself in communication with him, to request the latter "to bring up his whole division, and make great haste, or he feared he would be too late." Clarke's brigade of Worth's division was immediately dispatched, in conformity with this request, and arriving opportunely, followed up the assault; which Pillow's division, seeing how feeble was the defense, had by this time renewed. A few gallant officers and men, seizing scaling ladders, rushed forward from the *Glorieta*, and other points, where they had been sheltered, and planting them against the inner battlements, scaled the walls and possessed themselves of the fortress, with but little loss. A company of marines, and one of the New York regiment entered nearly at the same moment. My friend Passed-Midshipman Rogers, of Pillow's staff, was among the foremost of the stormers on this occasion.

Let us now follow up Quitman, who encountered hotter work on the other side of the castle, where Santa Anna had planted several batteries, and assembled a large force, to guard the causeway to the city. Quitman's storming parties were composed, beside the reinforcement from Twiggs' division, under Captain Casey, of a picked volunteer force, under Captain Reynolds, of the marines, and of one hundred and twenty men, under Major Twiggs, of the same corps. The road over which he advanced, beside being cut, so as to render it nearly impassable, was swept by a battery in front, and fired upon in flank, by other batteries

on the causeway. Long lines of infantry lay behind dikes, and occupied every other point which afforded them the least shelter. It seemed impossible for men to advance in face of such obstacles; but the gallant Mississippian, with his storming parties in front, moved forward boldly to the assault. On his left, a short distance from the road, there were some stone and *adobe* houses, which afforded him partial shelter, and thither he moved by a flank. Between these houses, and the outer wall of the fortress, there was a low meadow, intersected by wet ditches, partially covered from view by long grass. General Shields was directed to move obliquely over this meadow, in the direction of the fortress, preparatory to the assault; which he did gallantly, in the face of an appalling fire, from which he suffered severely, being himself among the wounded. This movement was followed, in like gallant manner, by Lieutenant-Colonel Geary, of the 2d Pennsylvanians. In the meantime, General Smith, who had been instructed to move in reserve on the right flank of the assaulting column, to protect it from skirmishers, or more serious attacks in that quarter, had advanced over the meadow to the right of the road, and was threatening to cut the enemy's line (extending toward the city), and take him in the rear. All being now ready, at the same time that the assaulting parties dashed forward to ascend the steep acclivity of the fortress, Smith with his rifles, made a rush for the road. The former arrived in time to join in Pillow's assault, which by this time had been renewed, as I have stated, and the latter gallantly carried one of the enemy's batteries, cutting his line, as he had threatened, and possessing himself of the causeway. The gallant Major Twiggs, of the marines, fell, much lamented, in the commencement of these operations, while leading forward the storming party of his own corps. He was a brother of the general of the same name, so often distinguished in this war. Thus was carried Chapultepec; an almost impregnable fortress, which promised us much trouble and great loss, but which for the want of *morale*, on the part of the defense, fell into our power almost without a struggle.

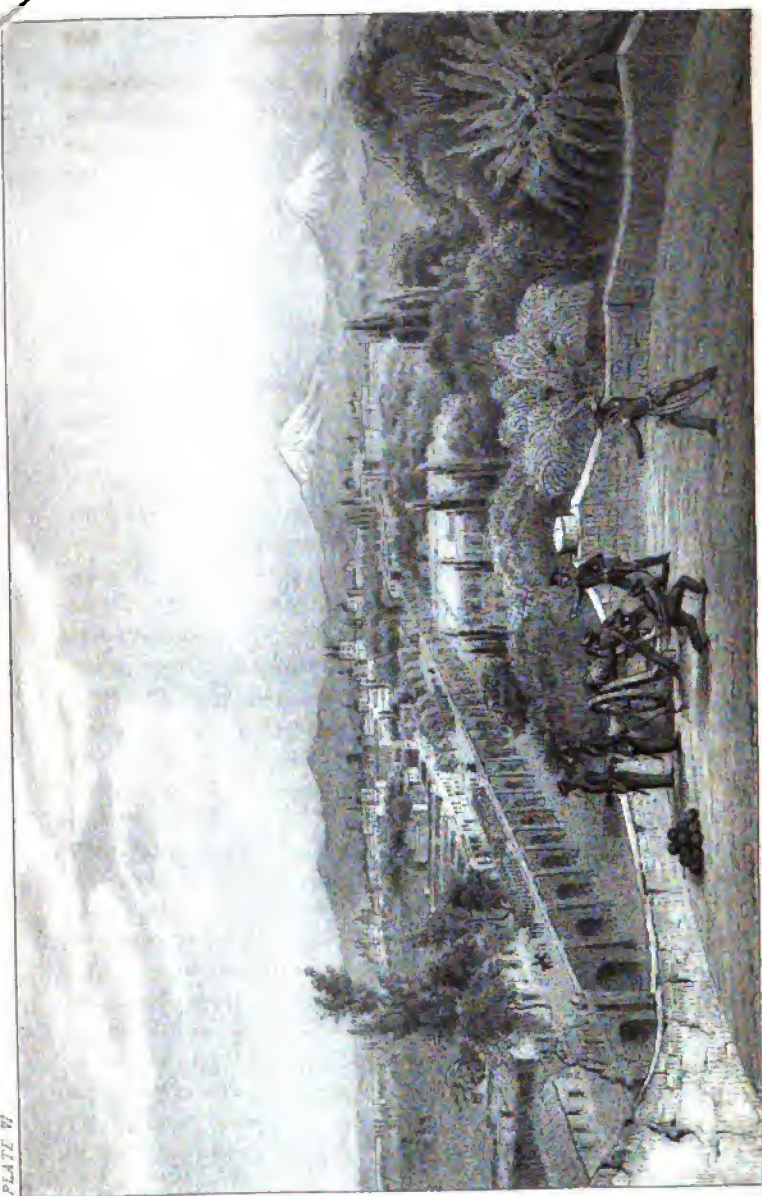
## CHAPTER XXII.

BATTLES of the causeways—Worth's operations on the causeway of San Cosmé—Quitman's operations on the causeway of Chapultepec—Entrance of the army into the city of Mexico—The post of honor given to General Quitman on this occasion—Insurrection of the populace—Suppression of the insurrection—Santa Anna vacates the presidency and expatriates himself—Meeting of the Mexican congress and ratification of peace—Reflections upon the war and its results.

WHILE Pillow and Quitman had been employed in carrying Chapultepec, as described in the last chapter, Worth had not been idle. After having dispatched Clarke's brigade, as before stated, to the succor of the former, he moved with Garland's brigade, Smith's battalion of light-infantry, and Duncan's battery, around the north-eastern base of the hill of Chapultepec, with the view of holding in check, or attacking, if opportunity offered, the enemy's right. He was directed by the general-in-chief, to move cautiously with his now small command, lest he should be overwhelmed by superior numbers. We had not proceeded far, before we came upon one of the batteries of the enemy, which had been gallantly assailed by Magruder's field-guns, particularly the section under Lieutenant Jackson, who had manfully continued at his post until he had lost all his horses, and nearly all his men. The road was literally choked up with dead men and animals.—The enemy's fire ceased soon after our appearance, influenced by Garland's movement, who had been deployed over the field to the left, and had met and put to flight the enemy's right that rested on some scattering huts, in that direction. The gallant Colonel Trousdale, since governor of Tennessee, had also preceded us on this road, and been hotly engaged with the enemy. He was still at the head of his regiment, although badly wounded in the arm. Driving the enemy before us, we entered the San Cosmé causeway, about the same time that Smith (general) had pierced that of Chapultepec. Nothing beyond the capture and







WORTH'S LINE OF OPERATIONS

CAUSEWAY OF SAN COSMÉ, WORTH'S LINE OF OPERATIONS.

occupation of Chapultepec, seemed, as yet, to have been thought of, or planned by the general-in-chief; and the several divisions, in the absence of orders, were left, for some time, to their own discretion. Worth, seeing the importance of following up the blow struck at the enemy by the capture of this fortress, did not wait for instructions, but pushed forward in pursuit, on the San Cosmé road. Quitman did the same thing on the Chapultepec road. The Chapultepec road runs to the city in a straight line, whereas that of San Cosmé makes an elbow or angle to the north. Both roads are broad avenues, flanked by deep ditches and marshy grounds, on either side, and an aqueduct, supported by arches of heavy masonry, runs along the middle of each. Each causeway thus presents two roads, one on either side of an aqueduct; and the reader perceives at a glance, the facilities afforded by such avenues, both for attack and defense. We are mainly indebted to these causeways for our easy access to the city. They are thus romantically connected with both "conquests of Mexico;" or at least one of them is, that of Chapultepec—San Cosmé having been built subsequent to the first conquest. Quitman was soon met and checked, by a breastwork and ditch thrown across the road, which it was impossible to turn, and which he must have been compelled to carry, by a front attack at great loss, had it not been for the friendly assistance of Worth, who, delaying the march of his own division, pushed Duncan boldly forward on a cross-road, with a section of his battery, covered by Smith's light battalion, to within four hundred yards of the enemy's position, and opened one of those destructive fires upon his flank, and rear, which nothing could withstand. The enemy soon gave way, and while falling back, in great confusion, Duncan's grape told with fearful effect upon his flying ranks. Quitman, who had, at the same time been gallantly bearding the work, with a howitzer, under Drum, and with Smith's Rifles, followed up his advantage with spirit, and fought his way bravely to the gate of Belen, which he carried by assault (being among the foremost in the assault himself), some hours before Worth entered that of San Cosmé, as will hereafter be related; the greater length of Worth's route (the road making a *détour*, as has been before remarked), and this assistance rendered our chivalrous rival, delaying consid-

rably our advance. The 2d brigade, under Colonel Clarke, now joined us, and with our veteran division once once more reunited, we moved forward and carried a second battery, and afterward a third, both of them strong works, and enfilading the road. The enemy had withdrawn his guns, before we reached them, probably for the defense of the *garita*. This brought us to the *Campo Santo*, or English burying-ground (where, afterward, many of our gallant dead, who had died in the city, of their wounds, were deposited), near which the road and aqueduct bend to the right, and proceed in a straight line to the city gate. At this point, the general-in-chief came up, with his staff, and instructed General Worth to press on, and carry the gate of San Cosmé, and, if possible, to penetrate to the Alameda.

The day was now well advanced.

Soon afterward, General Cadwallader joined us, by the orders of the general-in-chief, and Colonel Riley came up, with his brigade, between eight and nine, P. M., after we had carried the *garita*. The gallant colonel had been kept, all day, before the southern gates, to continue the feint which had been begun in that quarter, some days before. General Cadwallader was posted, by Worth, at the *Campo Santo*, to hold that point as we advanced, and to look to our flanks and rear. A short distance beyond the *Campo Santo*, we came upon another battery; and some two hundred and fifty yards farther on, and sustaining it, was the last defense of the enemy, the *garita* of San Cosmé. The approach to these two defenses was in a right line, and the whole space was literally swept by grape, canister, and shells, from a heavy gun and howitzer; added to which, severe fires of musketry were delivered from the *asoteas* of the adjacent houses, and churches—the road from the *Campo Santo* to the *garita* being occupied by a straggling village, the stone-walls and flat roofs of the houses of which, afforded the enemy great advantages for defense.

Our advance was here, for the first time, seriously checked; and it became necessary to vary our plan of operations. A glance at the localities enabled General Worth so to dispose of his division, as to drive the enemy from his positions, almost without loss on our part, notwithstanding the formidable preparations for defense. With the speed of thought, Garland was thrown to the right (his

brigade within, and masked by the aqueduct), and instructed to dislodge the enemy from the buildings in his front, and endeavor to reach and turn the left of the *garita*, taking advantage of such cover as might offer, to enable him to effect these objects. Clarke's brigade was, at the same time, ordered to take the buildings on the left of the road, and by the use of bars and picks, burrow through from house to house (as our gallant chief had done with so much success at Monterey, with the assistance of his brave Texans), and in like manner carry the right of the *garita*. While these orders were being executed, a mountain-howitzer was placed on the *azotea* of the church of San Cosmé on the right, and another on a commanding building on the left. Having been sent to superintend the placing of the latter, I thought I discovered in the officer who had charge of it, a *sprinkling* of salt-water. In transporting his piece up the stair-way, in the peculiar method of handling his handspikes, and in the semi-nautical phrase, and pointed and energetic manner in which he delivered his orders, there was no mistaking the sailor. The gallant captain (Edwards of the *Voltigeurs*), had indeed, close-reefed to many a gale, as I found upon inquiry, out of the port of Norfolk, Va. I was rejoiced to meet, as the reader may be sure, in so novel a place, as a housetop on the causeway of San Cosmé, in the great valley of Mexico, a brother seaman, who had laid aside his marline-spike, and come "booted and spurred," as a "dashing voltigeur," to revel in the "Halls of the Montezumas." The gallant captain, though erst of the merchant service, handled his piece, and threw his shells with as much skill and ability, as if he had come fresh from the quarter-deck of a man-of-war. The howitzer on the church did equally brisk and effective work; and while the sappers and miners were boring their way patiently, but surely, from house to house, toward the *garita*, numerous detached parties were carrying on a brisk skirmish with the enemy, under such cover as could be found. At this period it became necessary to advance a piece of artillery, to the deserted breast-work before described, as situated about two hundred and fifty yards from the *garita*. As the road was continually swept by discharges from heavy guns, this was a most desperate undertaking; but desperate as it was, it was accomplished in gallant style, by Lieutenant Hunt, of Dun-

can's battery. Watching his opportunity, and moving at full speed, he reached his position, and came muzzle to muzzle with the enemy, in less time than I have been describing the operation ; but in these few moments, he lost one killed and four wounded, out of nine men. The "borers" having at length worked their way to a convenient position, from which to make an assault upon the last stronghold of the enemy in our quarter, our men sprang, as if by magic, to the tops of the houses, into which they had thus quietly and unobservedly made their way, and to the utter surprise and consternation of the enemy, who was still busy with his guns at the gate, opened upon him within easy range, a most deadly fire of musketry. The effect was electric ; a single discharge, in which many of his gunners were killed as they had stood, with their rammers and sponges in hand, was sufficient to drive him in confusion from the breastwork, when a prolonged shout from our brave fellows, announced to their comrades below, that we were in possession of the *garita* of San Cosmé, and already in the city of Mexico ! This occurred about sunset, on the evening of the 13th of September, 1847.

Thus we had, indeed, at length overcome, as General Scott had prematurely announced to his government, after the battle of Churubusco, "all difficulties—distance, climate, fortifications, ground and numbers." General Worth slept that night with his staff, and most of his division, a short distance within the city gate. There was nothing to prevent us from marching, whenever we chose, to the grand plaza, in the center of the city, and as we sank to rest, on our weary pillows, after the toils and dangers of the day, our feelings may be better imagined than described. A merciful Providence had conducted us, in safety, through many hard-fought battles to the ancient and renowned city of Mexico, and we had written a page in its annals, which will connect, in all time to come, the romantic and chivalrous deeds of Cortez, Alvarado, and Sandoval, with those of the glorious little army of our republic, under Scott, Worth, Quitman, Twiggs, Pillow, Smith, and other chiefs whose fame is as undying, and will be almost as romantic, a century or two hence, as that of their mail-clad predecessors. These latter came fresh from the battle-fields of Italy and Grenada, to gather still greener laurels in the then wonderful

region of the new world, and to supplant a semi-civilization, which though but comparatively recent, had already become decrepit and corrupt, with the newer and more vivifying civilization of the cross; and the former had come in their turn, not to sweep away, indeed, the civilization of the cross, but to revivify it, and infuse into it that spirit of progress which had well-nigh been crushed by the heel of despotism, under which it had writhed for three centuries. Both were the agents of an overruling and all-wise Providence, carrying out his inscrutable designs with regard to the destinies of mankind.

Worth had fought his way to the city, over the celebrated causeway of Tacuba, by which Cortez had retreated on the memorable *Noche Triste*. We had passed through the once populous quarter (now a mere suburb) of Tlaletolco, where according to Cortez and old Bernal Diaz, forty thousand people had been wont to "traffic in the market-place," and we had identified, amid the whistling of balls and the shout of battle, the famous "leap of Alvarado." No wonder that we were agitated by strange and indescribable feelings, as we lay down to rest, that night; waking, we were in a land of poetry and romance; sleeping, in a land of dreams.

I must not omit to notice here, a strange mistake, which occurs in the dispatch of the general-in-chief, while relating the events of this day to the government. It is as follows: "By eight o'clock in the evening, Worth had carried two batteries in the suburb. According to my instructions he here posted guards and sentinels, and placed his troops under shelter for the night. There was but one more obstacle—the San Cosmé gate (custom-house) between him and the great square in front of the cathedral and palace—the heart of the city; and that barrier, it was known, could not, by daylight, resist our siege-guns thirty minutes." I have already stated that we had carried the San Cosmé gate, about sunset, and that we slept within the city, with no obstacle between us and the great plaza. The historian who should be guided by this dispatch, would naturally conclude, that while Quitman had effected a lodgment within the gate of Belen, and consequently within the city of Mexico, during the afternoon of the 13th, Worth, not having been able to do the same with regard to the

gate of San Cosmé, had encamped for the night outside of the gate, in order to await the return of daylight to enable him to bring into play his "siege-guns;" which was not the fact. When it is recollected that General Scott wrote with General Worth's report before him, in which the facts are distinctly stated as I have recorded them, the mistake shows a culpable want of care, in not consulting with proper diligence, the papers from which he was compiling his dispatch. He knew that the capital was the "goal of general ambition;" and when the question of taking it was concerned, it was certainly inexcusable, from any cause whatever, to give a wrong version of the affair. Not only was this injustice done General Worth, in the historical relation of the facts given by the general-in-chief, but the former was halted by order of the latter at the Alameda, near the center of the city, which we had reached as early as six o'clock the next morning, in order that General Quitman might precede him to the grand plaza, and there have the honor of hoisting on the capital, the proud emblem of our nation—the glorious stripes and stars which we had borne in triumph from Vera Cruz. Next to our own chief, we, of the first division were delighted that this honor should fall upon Quitman, but we could not help remarking upon the apparent partiality of the act. Indeed General Scott seems to have been self-accused of this, and he has endeavored to excuse himself in his dispatch, as follows: "In this grateful service [hoisting our flag on the capital], Quitman might have been anticipated by Worth, but for my express orders, halting the latter at the head of the Alameda (a green park), within three squares of that goal of general ambition. The capital, however, was not taken by any one or two corps, but by the talent, the science, the gallantry, the prowess of this entire army." This was all very true, but it does not explain, why Worth should be *turned back*, in order that Quitman might precede him. It would certainly have seemed but fair that Worth, having the ability to march to the grand plaza before Quitman, should have been permitted to do so; and that he had this ability, will be apparent from the following brief statement of facts:

The gate of Belen is a remote suburb of the city of Mexico, and Quitman, when he had entered it, found himself bearded,



not only by a formidable battery on the Paseo, but by the citadel, a heavy-armed work of large extent, which was not only sufficient (taken in front) to hold him, but the whole army in check. Nor did he advance a single step beyond this until after the surrender of the city. On the contrary, General Scott sent him reinforcements and intrenching tools, and he employed himself the whole night, in endeavoring to fortify himself in his position, and in constructing new batteries to be opened upon the enemy in the morning. And when the morning came, and a white flag was hoisted on the citadel, as a token that the city had surrendered, the fact was so inexplicable to him, that he sent two members of his staff to inquire into the truth of the matter, before he would base any movement upon it. In the meantime, let us see how the surrender was brought about by Worth. This officer says, in his dispatch: "The remainder of the division was now marched within the city gate [about twilight] and Captain Huger, of the ordnance, who had been directed by the general-in-chief to report to me with heavy guns sometime before, was desired to advance a twenty-four-pounder and a ten-inch mortar, place them in position at the *garita*, obtain the direction, and open a few shot and shell upon the grand plaza and palace, assumed to be sixteen hundred yards distant. This battery opened at nine o'clock—three shot being fired from the gun, and five from the mortar. They told with admirable effect, as at one o'clock at night, a commission from the municipality came to my advanced post, announcing that immediately after the heavy guns opened, the government and army commenced evacuating the city, and that the commission was deputed to confer with the general-in-chief, to whose headquarters it was passed, under Asst. Adjt. Gen. Mackall. At five o'clock, A. M., on the 14th, my troops and heavy guns advanced into the city, and occupied the Alameda, to the point where it fronts the palace, and there halted at six o'clock; the general-in-chief having instructed me to take a position, and await his further orders." It thus appears, that while Quitman was fortifying himself in the Belen gate, unable to advance a foot, Worth had opened upon the plaza and palace, and caused the evacuation and surrender of the city; was at liberty at any moment to advance and occupy it; and that he did, in fact, advance and occupy it,

before any other corps of the army could do so. If, as General Scott declared, "In the glorious conquest *all* had contributed—early and powerfully—the killed, the wounded, and the fit for duty—at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, San Antonio, Churubusco (three battles) the Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec—as much as those who fought at the gates of Belen and San Cosmé," why was one officer turned back, in order to give precedence to another? Nay, more, why was the officer, who was turned back, the very one who had opened the way for the others to enter?

Our troops, to the number of about six thousand, entered the great city of Mexico in the undress uniforms, in which they had marched so many weary miles and fought so many desperate battles. To behold so novel a spectacle, the various streets poured forth their thousands of spectators, and the balconies and house-tops were filled beside, with a gay and picturesque throng. So dense was the crowd, that it was frequently necessary to halt until the pressure was removed. The *Calle de Plateros*, through which we marched to the grand plaza, is the street in which all the principal shops are found; and although these were closed, the gay curtains that fluttered from the balconies above; the numerous streamers and flags that were hung out (almost every house had prepared and hung out a neutral flag, as English, French, Spanish, etc., as a means of protection), and the fashionably-dressed women, who showed themselves without the least reserve at doorways and windows, gave one the idea rather of a grand national festival, than of the entry of a conquering army into an enemy's capital.

General Scott, arrayed in his full uniform, and surrounded by his numerous staff, dressed in like manner, the whole presenting a very imposing and military-looking cavalcade, was escorted by Harney's dragoons to the national palace. He had scarcely reached this point, however, before a change came over the scene. A miscreant fired from a house-top among a group of officers of Worth's division, and seriously wounded Colonel Garland. Other reports of small arms were heard simultaneously, in various other directions, and it soon became evident that there was a fermentation among the populace, and that our work had, as yet, been but partially done. We were but six thousand, all told, and were in

the midst of a city of two hundred thousand inhabitants! There were apparently men enough in the streets, to have crushed us with the paving-stones, if they had possessed but a tithe of the patriotism or valor, which had inspired their noble ancestors at the siege of Saragossa, under the brave Palafox. But this was no patriotic uprising of a great and indignant people, in defense of their firesides. Alas, for poor Mexico! the people (as the reader has had abundant evidence in almost every page of these *Memoirs*) were a dead and unleavened mass, as incapable of the sentiment of patriotism, as of the other nobler virtues. Still our position was somewhat critical. We were exposed in the midst of streets, that were flanked on either side by massive stone houses (some of them three and four stories high), with flat roofs and parapets, answering all the purposes of fortifications, and unless energetic measures were adopted, we might lose many valuable lives before the insurrection could be quelled. In a moment, therefore, everything was in motion. The quick movement of troops in various directions, the rattling of artillery at full speed through the streets, the galloping hither and thither of aids and orderlies, the shrieks of the women as they disappeared in haste from the balconies, and the firing from the house-tops, which increased every moment, indicated that more blood was about to flow, and that we could not as yet sit ourselves down quietly in the city of Mexico.

Worth immediately placed his howitzers and Duncan's battery in position to command the several streets, whence the firing proceeded in his quarter, and detached skirmishing parties in various directions, with orders to make their way into the houses, take positions similar to those of the enemy—pursuing him wherever practicable—and shoot down every man who should be found skulking on a house-top, or screened by a window, with arms in his hand. Similar measures were taken by other corps, and very soon, a sort of running skirmish ensued in various parts of the city. Some of the enemy becoming so bold as to show themselves in the streets, the artillery was opened upon these, and they were swept with grape and canister. Now and then a house, which had been taken possession of by our assailants, was battered with a round-shot. But the artillery fire was continued no longer than

was necessary to clear the streets; as we were unwilling to do more damage to property, than the case absolutely required, or to involve the innocent in the fate of the guilty. An animated skirmish was kept up with small arms, however, until night put an end to the contest. Worth now posted his division in the Alameda, and established his head-quarters in a commodious and handsomely-furnished house, belonging to Peña y Peña, afterward president of the republic, fronting this most beautiful of the parks of Mexico.

The uprising, which had at first appeared to us an insurrection of the people, proved to be nothing more than the ill-concerted action of some three thousand prisoners, whom Santa Anna had released, the night before, from their confinement in the several jails of the city. These villains, in the interval between the departure of their patron and our entry into the city, had already begun to rob the public offices, and commit other depredations, and had opened their fire upon us, for the sole purpose of continuing a disorder, amid which they might plunder their unfortunate countrymen. The municipal government, and the better order of citizens, seeing that no good could result from this species of warfare, at once arrayed themselves on our side, and exerted all their influence to suppress it. The firing, nevertheless, continued through the greater part of the next day, our men following the vagabonds up so closely, as to kill great numbers of them. This matter of being killed was not (to use a Hibernicism) what they had been accustomed to. In their numerous civil broils, they had been in the habit of firing at each other from behind walls and parapets, at a *safe distance*, and the government of Mexico has been known to change hands after a *bloody* revolution, in which no more than half a dozen *leperos* have lost their worthless lives. But when, instead of being fired at from a like safe distance, by our troops, they were followed up, and shot down in their hiding-places, why, this was another affair. They soon succumbed, and order was restored to the city after the lapse of a day or two.

General Scott, having established, in concert with the municipality, a rigid police, the citizens resumed confidence, reopened their shops, and went about their usual avocations. Notwith-

standing the best exertions of all parties, however, a dastardly system of assassination, which threatened to decimate our numbers, was continued for ten days and more after our entry. Although the most stringent orders were given by the various generals of division, to prevent their men from straggling, some few would find their way out after night-fall, and being decoyed by women, or made drunk in the low groggeries, were invariably murdered, sometimes to the number of fifteen or twenty in a single night!

General Quitman was appointed civil and military governor; and administering the duties of his office with firmness and ability, the city of Mexico, from having been the hot-bed of faction and turbulence, for so many years, very soon became a thrifty mart of commerce, and a well-ordered and peaceful capital. Citizens, who had run away from us in alarm, returned to find their persons and property respected, and to compare, much to our advantage, the present with the former government.

One of the most pleasing features of this campaign, was the good order and high state of discipline, in which our troops entered this rich and populous city. Although we had carried it by assault, and were entitled, in consequence, according to the barbarous practices of European warfare, to disgrace ourselves by sack and rape, no one thought of such things—the common soldier no more than his officer. With the exception of some thieving that was carried on, on a small scale, in our rear, by the “outsiders” (these were civilian followers of the army, who hovered around us, like greedy cormorants, and whom it was found impossible to get rid of), the utmost respect was paid to both person and property. An example of which General Scott may well be proud, and which we may hold up, triumphantly, to our neighbors over the water, who make so many more pretensions to civilization than ourselves, and who still regard us as comparatively barbarian. Indeed, in whatever light we regard this campaign, it is one of the most wonderful on record. It is not wonderful that we triumphed over Mexico. This was to have been expected from her physical, and still more from her moral weakness. But like the knights of old, we seemed to have scorned to avail

ourselves of the weakness of our enemy ; nay, more, we invited him to combat on terms highly advantageous to himself. With the single exception of Cerro Gordo, we had constantly met him with inferior numbers (sometimes in the proportion of one to four, as at Molino del Rey), and he had always had the advantage of us in position. We had beaten him signally, and fatally in every contest, from the time of our landing at Vera Cruz, to our entry into the city of Mexico. The small scale on which our war with Mexico was conducted, prevents this famous campaign from taking rank, in point of numbers, with those gigantic military operations of Europe, which from time to time have absorbed the attention of nations ; but in this respect alone. Tested by any other standard, it will compare favorably with any one of them. In marches, in successful strategy, in hard fighting, and in its decisive results, it may be placed side by side with any of Napoleon's Italian campaigns, and gain, rather than lose, by the comparison. With a mean force of ten thousand men, we landed in the season of tempests, on a coast where pestilence annually sweeps off its thousands, and marched through a nation of eight millions of people, triumphantly to its capital, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. This march, too, was performed, for the most part, in a mountainous region, so strongly fortified by nature, that the Spanish government, and after it, the Mexican, never dreamed of the possibility of its being invaded, or so much as thought of the necessity of constructing a single defensive work, with a view to such a result, until the heads of our columns already began to show themselves on the steps of the mountains. That errors were committed in the course of this campaign, it is useless to deny ; but the human mind is fallible, and in what campaign have not errors abounded ? These errors, too, served but to bring forth into bolder relief, the indomitable courage and the self-reliance of the American soldier. Hard-fought battles promptly rectified mistakes, and with diminished numbers we performed those prodigies, which would otherwise have been performed by our whole force, with diminished glory. But I have already wearied the reader, I fear, by the endless details of march and battle through which he has followed me. Let me

bring my narrative to a close, and leave him to pronounce upon the campaign his own eulogy, as he may see this written in the facts and results.

General Santa Anna, on the night of the 13th, when Worth's shells began to burst over his head in the national palace, and to threaten Mexico, as its terrified inhabitants believed, with the fate of Vera Cruz, retreated with the fragment of his army (great numbers deserting him, and dressing themselves in citizens' clothing, mixing with the people, in a manner to escape detection) to Guadalupe Hidalgo. He retired in such haste, as to leave behind him, in the public offices, much valuable correspondence relating to the movements of his army, forty pieces of artillery, and large quantities of ammunition. His lady, who had been in the habit of accompanying him in his campaigns, was consigned to the care of that "intelligent neutral," and intimate friend of his, the British consul, of armistice memory. With a gallantry becoming the leader of an American army, General Scott, at the request of this gentleman, detailed an escort of dragoons, after quiet had been restored in the city, to conduct her to the arms of her husband.

On the 16th of September, the latter resigned the presidency (which, indeed, he had previously forfeited, by putting himself at the head of the army, in August, without the consent of congress), and nominated Peña y Peña to succeed him; appointing as adjuncts, General Herrera and Señor Alcorta. The whole of this proceeding was irregular. By the Mexican constitution, the resignation of the president must be accepted by congress, to be complete; but there being no congress in session, the fallen chief dispensed with this formality, by accepting his own resignation. His nomination of Peña y Peña was supererogatory, as this gentleman, being chief justice of the supreme court, became *ex officio* president, upon the occurrence of a vacancy, until congress could elect a president, *ad interim*, for the remainder of the term; and his appointment of adjuncts was altogether illegal, as this appointment is required, by the constitution, to be made by the executive council; which, like the congress, was not in session. Peña y Peña, upon being duly notified of these events, assumed the office of president, but refused to acknowledge the legality of the appointment of Herrera and Alcorta, as his adjuncts. He

proceeded (being in retirement on his estate of Canaleja) to Queretaro a few days afterward, called the congress together, and directing General Santa Anna to turn over the command of the army to a successor, whom he named, placed this chief in arrest, until a court-martial could be convened for his trial, for the loss of the several battles in which he had been beaten, and for his conduct generally in the war. Santa Anna (who in the meantime had marched with a small force upon Puebla, to try his fortune against Colonel Childs, who had been left in command at that place and by whom he was beaten as effectually as he had been by General Scott), seeing the turn things had taken, made a desperate effort to regain his power. He declared that his resignation was invalid, and insisted upon being permitted to resume the reins of government; vaunted of his exploits in the war, and sent his friend Rejon (who, as the reader recollects, promised to die by his side in the city of Mexico) and other factionists to Queretaro, to keep alive the war spirit, and intrigue for his restoration to the presidency. But it was all to no purpose, the people had become tired of him. With much justice, they traced to him, and to similar military patriots, all the evils which had befallen their unhappy country—the long series of domestic broils and misgovernment which had preceded the war, and which had so corrupted and depraved the great mass of the population, as to render patriotism a by-word, and honor a jest. They saw that he, and such men as he, who, arrayed in gorgeous uniforms, had trampled under foot the civil power, and governed the country as they would a camp; who boasted of their courage and their skill, and of their ability to march to the Sabine, and wrest Texas boldly from our embrace; were as craven on the battlefield, as they had been valiant in the oppression of their fellow-citizens. The more intelligent asked very pertinently, where is that army which has battered on us, for so many years, and which, when the war was being developed, promised to stand by us in the hour of need? Gone! routed and destroyed, by a handful of valiant men, whom it ought to have crushed by its numbers alone! And such will always be the case under similar circumstances. We have only beheld in Mexico, in our day, the same drama which was performed in Italy and the east, fifteen



hundred years ago. We have but seen a decrepit and corrupt people overthrown by a more virtuous and vigorous race from the north ; the only difference being in the comparative civilization of the two conquering nations. Venality and the corruption of manners have been as rife in the city of Mexico, as they were in Rome and Constantinople, when the empire of the Cæsars was wont to be put up at public auction, by the Pretorian bands of these respective capitals. Courage in civilized man is a noble attribute, based upon virtue alone. Corrupt the individual, and you remove from him all those high incentives to honor and patriotism, which are the only sure guarantees of the safety of states. Mexico, unfortunately, lost sight of this fundamental truth, when she got up her ill-advised quarrel with us, on the subject of Texas. She still spoke the language of a chivalrous and virtuous people ; but this language was mere form, the substance had long since departed.

Santa Anna finding it, thus impossible, to set on foot another revolution, and being abandoned by his followers, who, in the language of politicians, found him no longer "available," made his way to the small port of Antigua, near Vera Cruz, and abandoned his country to that fate, which he had, himself, in a great measure, prepared for her.

Better counsels began now to prevail. Although there was still much senseless opposition to peace, this opposition was gradually overcome by the influence of such men as Herrera, Peña y Peña, and other intelligent and true patriots, who had no military aspirations to be gratified by a continuance of the war. The "elements of peace," which General Scott and Mr. Trist had been so fearful of dispersing, by beating the enemy *too much*, began now rapidly to assemble at Queretaro. On the 11th of November, General Anaya (whom we had made prisoner at Churubusco), was elected president *ad interim*, to serve the remainder of Santa Anna's term. In the following December, the congress which had been called by Peña y Peña, adjourned (the terms of its members having expired), after a good deal of angry discussion, on the all-absorbing topics of peace and war. A new congress was elected, and having met in better temper than the last, the great question of peace was forthwith taken in hand. Anaya's fragment of a term expiring before a new election could be made, Peña y Peña

returned to the executive chair, and it was under his auspices that the peace was finally concluded. Our government, with that forbearance which had characterized it during the whole course of the war, made no new demands upon our prostrate enemy, but was content to accept the same terms, it had proposed to him, after the battle of Churubusco. These terms were now agreed to without hesitation, and early in February, 1848, not quite two years after the breaking out of the war, a treaty of peace was definitively signed by Mr. Trist and the Mexican plenipotentiaries, Messrs. Couto, Atristain, and Cuevas.

I have thus brought my memoirs of "Service Afloat and Ashore, during the Mexican War," to a close; and it only remains for me, before taking leave of the reader, to cast a hasty glance at some of the results of this contest, both as they affect our late enemy and ourselves. And first, as to our losses. These may be stated (in round numbers) at twenty thousand men; some fifteen thousand of whom perished *in campaign*, by a violent death, or by the hand of disease; the remaining five thousand perishing in the two squadrons, in the Gulf of Mexico, and on the Pacific coast, and in going to and returning from the theater of war. General Scott lost two thousand seven hundred men, in his campaign of the Valley of Mexico. I have more than once asserted, that in this campaign, General Worth bore the principal part, and fought most of the battles, the other divisions being mere accessories. Let us see how this statement is borne out by the figures of arithmetic, which, after all, are worth more, in our search after facts, than figures of speech. At Churubusco (including San Antonio), he lost three hundred and forty-six men; at Molino del Rey, he lost seven hundred and eighty-seven, and at Chapultepec, and the gate of San Cosmé, he lost one hundred and thirty-seven; making a total of one thousand two hundred and seventy, or very nearly one-half of the whole loss! There were four divisions, a brigade of cavalry, a corps of engineers (with a company of sappers and miners), and a corps of ordnance, with ordnance men attached. The division which sustained the next greatest loss, was that of Quitman (to which General Shields was attached). Its loss was five hundred and forty-eight, not one-half that of Worth!

The expenses of the war may be stated at about one hundred

and twenty millions of dollars, including the fifteen millions paid for New Mexico and California. I leave to small politicians the task of counterpoising and comparing this outlay, with the necessity we were under of chastising an insolent foe, and with the gains which we have made in territory. I have no talent for *per contra* sheets of this kind. But in a political and commercial point of view, no man can yet estimate the great advantages which are to accrue, both to Mexico and ourselves, from this war. In my opinion, the salvation of our institutions depends, in a great degree, upon a reasonable extension of our limits. This is the only thing which will rob faction of its bitterness, if it does not entirely destroy it. Fanaticism, whether religious, political or social, is always local; it never spreads, unless, indeed, it be spread as the great Arabian enthusiast spread his faith, by the sword. And the reason why it does not spread is, that it is error; and error, although it may be contagious in small districts, like the plague, can never inundate a vast country. Of what comparative importance is it at the present day, when our immense territory extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, that a meeting to denounce a law of the Union, or for any other disloyal and treasonable purpose, is held in Faneuil Hall, in the good city of Boston. The little actors on this little stage may make themselves as ridiculous as they please, but the President of this great republic will quietly point them to the map, to remind them that the Massachusetts of the old thirteen, is not the Massachusetts of thirty—forty—fifty—a hundred states! And that she is as powerless now for evil, as she was formerly powerful for good. The federal officers, armed with a *posse comitatus*, if need be, from the Pacific, will disperse her mobs, however composed, and execute the process which represents the majesty of twenty—thirty—forty—fifty millions of people! As our territorial limits increase, the individual states will become less and less important, and local jealousies and heart-burnings will scarcely produce more effect upon the nation at large, than does the gossiping of a remote village upon a metropolitan city. Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts, and the whisky rebellion in Pennsylvania, threw the whole country into commotion, and caused the Executive much anxiety, and a good deal of trouble before they could be quelled.

We should regard these things, at the present day, as mere "tempests in a tea-pot." And where is the solution for this? In the fact that then St. Mary's, in Georgia, was our southern boundary, whereas now, our flag floats proudly on the shores of the boundless Pacific! The diversity of climates, productions and pursuits will be so many additional motives for adhesion, making us, comparatively, more dependent upon each other, and binding us together, in one great free-trade's union. While these great ends are accomplished, each state will be as independent in all local concerns as before, and except in a few prescribed particulars, will be, to all intents and purposes, sovereign. It is this peculiarity of our system, which (as I have before remarked in these pages), befits it for extension almost *ad infinitum*, in contradistinction to central and consolidated governments. As for commerce, it is only necessary to remark that our Pacific front opens to us, and will enable us to monopolize, almost all the commerce of the East Indies, and of the west coast of America, north and south. This will make us the carriers and the factors of the world. Twenty years hence, and it will no longer be Britannia, but America "rules the waves." But it would require a volume to enumerate all the advantages which have accrued and are yet to accrue to us, from the Mexican war. Let us turn from so gigantic a theme, therefore, to contemplate, for a moment, its probable effect upon our late enemy.

We have seen, in the opening pages of these memoirs, the forlorn condition at which Mexico had arrived immediately preceding the war. We saw her society composed of various heterogeneous elements, struggling the one against the other, her commerce nearly destroyed, and her agricultural and mining interests at the lowest possible state of depression. In the course of two years (from 1844 to 1846), Santa Anna, Herrera, and Paredes were each hurled from the chief executive chair, by revolutions which agitated the country from one extreme to the other, and threatened a total dissolution of all government. Many of her statesmen of respectable abilities began to despair altogether of the success of republican institutions, and to turn their eyes upon the monarchies of Europe, as their only resource to guard them from the anarchy which impended. It is well known, that under the

presidency of Paredes (a dissolute military chieftain), an avowed monarchical party was established, which boldly set up an organ in the capital (*El Tiempo*), and disseminated thence its principles through all parts of the country, with an ability and zeal which drew over to it many of the less thinking portion of the people. Strange as it may appear, the project was seriously entertained of calling over one of the Bourbon princes, probably the Duc d'Aumale, or the Prince de Joinville, to wield the scepter of Iturbide. Fortunately for the country, the war with ourselves broke out, and put an end to all these disorders. The pressure from without produced a more or less perfect union among the parties within. Paredes was banished, Santa Anna recalled from banishment, and republican Mexico, recoiling from the monarchical extreme toward which she was fast verging, made one more effort to save herself, by adopting her old federal constitution, which some years previously, had given place to centralism. Previous to the war, Mexico, the most ill-governed and one of the most ignorant of the American republics, thought herself the wisest and one of the most powerful and chivalrous nations of the earth! Her state-papers bore the tone of arrogance, and sometimes of insolence toward foreign powers (as the reader has, more than once seen, in the course of these pages); her legislation was exclusive and offensive, and her boast of "marching to the Sabine" was no fantastical, unmeaning threat, but sober earnest—the bastard descendants of Gonsalvo de Cordova and Cortez believing in their ability to perform it. These illusions were all very natural; the Mexican people inhabiting, as the mass of them did, vast inland plains, isolated from intercourse with the rest of the world by stupendous ranges of mountains, and by the Chinese policy which they had inherited from their peninsular ancestors. It was absolutely necessary to their future progress that these illusions should be dispelled; and this was effectually done by the war. They were brought by this event, into rude and rough contact with a people whom they had been taught to despise, but whom they soon found superior to them, in civilization and the arts, as well as arms. The moral shock has been eminently beneficial to them. They have been taught, anew, to admire our institutions, to wonder at our unexampled progress, and to inquire

into its causes. I believe that there is not now a monarchist in Mexico ! It remains to be seen, whether they will be able to imitate us successfully. If they do, it will, perhaps, prolong their political existence a century ; no longer, as that man is blind who does not read, in what is passing around him, the inevitable decrees of fate. It is impossible to place two people, of such widely differing constitutions and temperaments, in juxtaposition with each other, without one of them being absorbed by the other.— But this absorption need not be violent ; nor need it be a cause of alarm on the part of the Mexican people, as ours is not a great central government, which, in imitation of Rome, will send a proconsul to govern them, and a quaestor to deplete them, but a federal republic, like their own, into which all those who enter are equals. The only difference to Mexico will be, that instead of occupying a subordinate station in the family of nations, she will be entitled to be inscribed in the foremost rank. In the meantime, if she profit by the lessons of the war, she will set herself diligently to work to prepare for the great change which awaits her. While the Sibyl is spinning the web of her fate, she should civilise and educate herself, to render herself the more worthy of the embrace of the young bridegroom to whom she is affianced.

The great mistake which Mexico has hitherto made, with regard to her policy, is the manner in which she has treated her Indian population. To this she owes most of her weakness. The Indians found in that country, at the time of the conquest, were not like our own. They were not ferocious and untamable savages, who disappeared upon the approach of civilization, like the frost before the sun, as did the natives of North America, but a docile and comparatively civilized people. As they could not be got rid of, the only other course open, was to educate and elevate them to the rank of citizens ; not to that nominal rank which they do, indeed, enjoy, but to that real rank which springs out of, and finds its sustenance in, social equality. Nature has interposed no barrier to this, by planting an unconquerable antipathy in the breast of one of the races, to the other, as she has done in regard to the white man and the negro ; and if the amalgamation be encouraged by the proper laws, in the course of three or four generations it will become complete. It is questionable, in my mind, too, whether

there would be any adulteration in this process; as I regard the Indian, in most parts of Mexico, as, physically, the superior of the compound of the Celt and the Moor, which is there denominated the white man. But whether this be palatable or not, it is the only alternative; for it is idle to suppose that the population of any country can live together in harmony and prosperity, when it is divided into two distinct classes, equal in the eye of the law, but unequal in everything else—particularly in a social point of view. The two classes must either mix, or one will govern the other.—The latter has always been, and still is, as the reader has seen, the case in Mexico; five-sixths of the eight millions of that country being either in *peon* servitude, or in a worse condition. How could Mexico be strong, in her contest with us, with but one-sixth of her population governing and overriding the rest, and leading it, like so many ignorant and besotted slaves, to the battle-field?

The army, that great incubus of Mexico, which has weighed down her energies for so many years, has, it is hoped, received its death-wound in this war. The military feeling of the country has not been destroyed, however, it has only received a salutary check. It has been too deeply rooted to be so summarily disposed of. The fondness for military titles (the title of colonel carrying with it the prefix of “excellency”) and for the trappings and tinsel of a uniform, has amounted to a perfect passion with the Mexican people; and they have been in the habit of making the greatest sacrifices to enrol themselves as military men. In the smallest villages, perched like eyries on the mountain peaks of the Andes, one beholds the ludicrous mixture of military affairs with the every-day occurrences of life; not unfrequently a colonel of the *militia activa*—active militia—may be seen, with his uniform on, arranging the bunches of garlic in his shop, or selling a bundle of *puros* to a chance customer. This fondness for titles, and for the glare and ornament of official dress, always accompanies the early stages, as well as the decay of civilization; and one scarcely knows to which of these causes to attribute it in Mexico, in which are seen so many of the features of both conditions of society. Even, since the war, we have seen these people elevating a military chieftain (*Arista*) to the chief magistracy; which is certainly a bad augury for the future prosperity of the country, especially when

it is recollected that this chief is one of the old revolutionists—he having headed, with General Duran, some years ago, the revolution entitled “*la revolucion de la religion y de las leyes*”—the revolution of religion and the laws. In the best organized countries, military men will carry with them into the executive chair, the habits of command which they have contracted in the camp. Even in our own country, we have had more than one example of the difficulty with which the despotic will of a military chieftain is confined within the pale of the constitution and the laws. In Mexico, military men, to the entire seclusion of civilians, have tyrannized over the country for a generation, without the least restraint. What has been, will be again. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for the Mexican people, if they wish to establish the supremacy of the laws, to *throw all these military men overboard*; let them belong to what school they may. They are all dangerous, for the reason that they are military men, if for no other; their habits, their love of power, their education, all unfit them for the discharge of civil duties. And then, it is humiliating in the last degree, that in the midst of the civilization of the nineteenth century, when the profession of arms has sunk to that subordinate condition, in which it should always remain in well organized states, that a people, by dint of party-organization and faction, should be denied the privilege of selecting their rulers from among the great statesmen of the country, and compelled to put up instead, with the talents of third and fourth-rate men, merely because these possess that sort of *ad captandum prestige* which appeals to the more barbarous parts of our nature! If the military were merely a class in Mexico, perhaps it would not be so difficult to get rid of it, but unfortunately it has its roots so deep in the hearts of all classes, that it cannot be torn out without great convulsions. The soldier represents all parties, and is, by turns, identified with them all. He fomented and keeps alive civil commotions, but he does not alone produce them. He is the exponent of the church, of the agricultural interest, of the manufacturing interest, of centralism, of federalism, in fine, of everything. Without him commotions may not entirely cease, but with him they will be sure to continue. The first step, therefore, is to get rid of him. And now is the most opportune moment, when



he has lost most of the *prestige* which he possessed previous to the war. The army once removed, by a slow and gradual process (as by permitting the turbulent old chiefs to retain their commissions on half pay, and not filling vacancies, as they are removed by death), the elements of society which remain, will have a better opportunity of coalescing. These elements, as yet, are many and discordant, but the discord, which exists among them, is a discord of details, and not of principles. All men are agreed as to the fundamental form of government; and surely matters of mere policy may be discussed and arranged, without the government's being rent in pieces by the discussion. In the thirty years of convulsions which have ensued, since the declaration of Mexican independence, many of the sharp points of party have already worn off, and much experience in the art of government has been gained. Let us, therefore, hope that a new era will arise in Mexico, and that she will profit by the lessons of experience she has already received, and particularly by the last and terrible lesson of the war. Respect is the first step toward a lasting friendship; our turbulent and proud sister has been taught to respect us, and I have but little doubt, that henceforth, she will cultivate with us the most friendly relations. The next generation of Mexicans may have cause to look back with satisfaction upon the struggle of their country with the United States, as the starting point whence a new impetus was given her, in that great race of civilization, which is to fit her for her ultimate incorporation into the Anglo-American family.

## ADDENDUM.

---

It will be recollected that Commodore Perry relieved Commodore Conner in the command of the Home Squadron, during the siege of Vera Cruz. An impression has, in consequence, gone abroad in the navy, that the former officer *sought* the command of this squadron, and was therefore guilty of some want of generosity toward the latter. I deem it but justice to Commodore Perry to state, that I have seen abundant evidence to the contrary. The command of the squadron was spontaneously tendered him by Mr. Secretary Bancroft, more than a year before—at the expiration of Commodore Conner's regular term of service.—Commodore Conner, when relieved, had served a year longer than the prescribed period, and Commodore Perry's orders were positive to assume the command. These two gallant men have no superiors in the navy, in all those qualities which should adorn the naval officer; and while ample justice should be rendered Commodore Conner, for his untiring and self-sacrificing services in the war, like justice should be rendered his successor, for the disinterested manner in which he became possessed of the command, and for his many bold and daring enterprises, undertaken and prosecuted with signal energy and ability.

p. 355 f

